TOWARDS A ‘MACINTYREAN TURN’ IN SOCIOLOGY: A CASE-STUDY IN SYNCRETIC DISCIPLINARY DEVELOPMENT

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REISS KRUGER

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ABSTRACT

As a discipline born out of the intertwining of traditions of philosophy, political economy, history, and more, sociology has always been an interdisciplinary area of academic research. Despite this, there is a particular interlocutor who is under-explored in contemporary sociology: Alasdair MacIntyre. While a few have asked what MacIntyre might offer sociology, this has been far from a *dialogue* between MacIntyre and contemporary sociology. This work will catalyze such a process, aiming at the development of a 'MacIntyrean Sociology.' To achieve this, this work lays out the dialogical approach it seeks to deploy (Ch 1), deeply engaging in the explication of many of MacIntyre's core theoretical developments throughout his career (Ch 2), and then traces the connection between MacIntyre's ideas and his personal and academic development to some of the foundational theorists in sociology – especially Marx and Weber. Starting with his Hegelian foundations, Marx's theoretical development is followed into MacIntyre's work, and the continuing influence of Marx is explicated (Ch 3, 4). Likewise, tracing the Nietzschean roots in Weber, we see the influence of each on MacIntyre's work (Ch 5, 6). The work concludes by deploying this broad range of theoretical grounding by taking up the case-study of 'public sociology' using the work of Pierre Bourdieu as an ideal-typical case-study in this regard (Ch 7) and asking the question of how a deployment of a more 'MacIntyrean' sociology might help overcome some of the challenges in this contemporary disciplinary development (Ch 8).

PREFACE

This dissertation is an original, independent work by the author, Reiss Kruger. Elements of Chapters 5 and 6 were formulated prior to the completion of this dissertation into a presentation for the 2023 International Society of MacIntyrean Enquiry conference, which was latter published as: Kruger, Reiss, "MacIntyre's Mean: Overcoming a Nietzschean-Weberian Spectrum of Excess and Deficiency," *Empresa y Humanismo*, 27, no. 1, (2024): 57-80. The remainder of this work is unpublished.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the completion of this work to some who unfortunately didn't live to see its completion: My sister Meg Darby Kruger, a fiery figure full of potential, taken from us far too soon, and our dogs Tsiig and Oddball. If there is something after this life, I can take solace at least knowing you are all with dad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would have been impossible to complete without a range of support from many people in the author's life. I would like to thank Dr. Philip Walsh for his continued invaluable support throughout the process of developing and deploying the structure and substance of this work, as well as his broader support in academic mentorship. The discipline would benefit from more sociologists like you. I would like also to thank Dr. Regina Rini and Dr. Michael Nijhawan for agreeing to be my committee members and for providing useful support throughout the writing and editing process. Thanks must also be extended to Dr. Stephen P. Turner for agreeing to be my external-external examiner. Your continued contribution to sociological theory is essential in a world of Weberian overspecialization, and my work here and in the future can continue from your example. Drs Joan Steigerwald and Haris Ali must also be thanked for agreeing to be my internal-external examiner and Dean's Representative respectively.

I would like to also thank the bedrock of our department's graduate student body: Audrey Tokiwa. One could not ask for a more cheerful, earnest, and supportive Graduate Program Assistant. I know my jade plants are in good hands. Considering the difficulties I have faced over the process of writing this, academically and otherwise, I could not have finished in any kind of organized state as either an academic or a human being without the loving support of my fiancée Lara Farah and her wonderful son, Antony. One could not ask for a better colleague, partner, and friend. Underappreciated and in the background of the actually process of writing, I would like to thank my brother, Chad Kruger, for being at home with my mother and our dogs when I couldn't be, especially during the various evacuations our hometown has gone through these last few years. I would also like to thank my friends outside the academy for the role they have played in maintaining my sanity and allowing me to disconnect from time to time, whether through roleplaying, video games, or just chatting – you know who are.

I could not complete a work such as this without thanking both the members of the International Society of MacIntyrean Enquiry and the Canadian Sociological Association. For those ISME members who I have gotten to know of these last couple years for continuing to inspire me, to make me feel like my work is not a lost cause, and to make me feel like I'm not totally off the mark in my understanding of MacIntyre, I am very grateful. ISME's conferences and reading groups have been incredibly educating, and I hope to continue to engage with and support this

welcoming community of academics in the future. Specifically for the good discussions with Joe Simpson, Simon Willems, Andrius Bielskis, and Jeffrey Pocock during our reading groups, and Kelvin Knight and others for their encouragement during ISME conferences. For the members of the CSA who have enabled me to grow as a sociologist and theorist and provided the means to test-run my ideas and broaden my range of knowledge, your support is likewise appreciated, especially during periods of academic and political turmoil. Lastly, I would like to thank Alasdair MacIntyre for being a (still) living example of someone who takes seriously challenges to their opinion, is willing to revise if necessary, and to try in good faith to put the theoretical world they engage with into practice every day.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

Sociology as a contemporary academic discipline has a relatively short history compared to other disciplines such as physics, philosophy, math, etc. If one were to ask the question of 'who the first sociologist was' it would be a fuzzy question with a likewise unclear answer.[1] However, a relatively safe bet would be one of the first academics to claim to be 'doing sociology:' Emile Durkheim. If one were to take this as the starting point, and seeking a slightly more accurate date were to pick the publication of *The Division of Labour in Society* as the first 'sociological work' confirming the existence of the discipline, then sociology began in 1893.[2] At one hundred twenty-nine years old, the discipline is certainly a) comparatively young, and b) modern (in that it was born of, and in, a modern age, and has very much been a study of the processes of 'modernization' and 'modernity' as much as a study of 'society' and 'socialization').

No discipline, however, can so easily be delineated. If students were to look at it in the fashion above, they would be left with a host of unanswered – and perhaps unanswerable – questions. Who was Durkheim responding to regarding questions of division of labour? Who was this Nietzsche fellow Weber was continuously referring to? Indeed, if a contemporary sociology student were to graduate with *no* knowledge of Marx, most professors would consider them failed by the institution. The problem of 'how far back' one must go in a history to make sense of a given place or time is open to debate, but the important point here is that since its inception sociology has not been a 'closed discipline.'[3] Perhaps a trend is noticeable here: there are a host of themes from a range of historical, social, and academic directions which influenced the birth of the discipline of sociology and have *continued to influence* its growth. Unlike some disciplines which

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[1] Many today trace 'sociological' themes in terms of theory, method, and areas of consideration to Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), Plato (428-347 BCE), Aristotle (384-322 BCE), Thucydides (460-400 BCE) and Confucious (551-479 BCE), for instance. See Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, "Introduction," in *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 4th Edition, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2021), 29-30.

[2] Or perhaps *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* by Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887. Or Auguste Comte's definition of the term 'sociology' in 1838. One could continue the tracing back of 'sociological ideas,' 'sociological thinking,' and similarities to modern sociological practices all the way to Socrates and beyond, but which work or theorist(s) 'initialized' the discipline is actually irrelevant to the point I am making.

[3] Marx, Smith, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Comte, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Ibn Sina and Ibn Khaldun, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, among others, all play roles in the foundation of the discipline, but none of them were 'sociologists.'

have had more firm boundaries (at least for longer periods of time),[4] sociology began as a space for dialogue between different areas of thought, and has continued to draw on 'external' influences, even as it has solidified its self-understanding as a discipline by cementing its 'own' methods, theories, etc.

It is this openness to theoretical and methodological dialogue which sociology was born with, and has maintained to various degrees throughout its history, that I aim to draw on and develop as I propose a new dialogue partner for the discipline: Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre's work over the past sixty-nine years began with an awareness of – and engagement with – many of the influences which sociology has drawn from (Marx, Hegel[5]), as well as many sociologists whose work to this day remains relevant (Goffman, Weber[6]). MacIntyre has proved himself open to dialogue with an eye towards sociology and sociological concerns – but sociology has largely remained ignorant of this potential dialogue partner.[7] We see in MacIntyre not only a *willingness* toward dialogue, but a *worthwhile* partner, who – through his own work – aids in contextualizing this dialogue,[8] and providing useful tools for sociologists engaged in a host of historical comparative work; normative sociological work; interactionist analysis and questions of the self; analyses of human habits and action; engagement with questions of human emotion; analyses of language-use and human communication; studies of knowledge production and deployment; looking at questions of risk, expertise, and power; theories of 'the background' to social interaction; the role institutions *do* play and *could* play in the social world; study of the

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[4] For instance, physics has largely been a discipline 'within itself.' Even periods of major revision (such as the overturning of the Ptolemic worldview, or the creation of quantum physics) have largely represented 'internal critiques' of the discipline.

[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, (London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1976); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, (London, UK: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd, 2001); Alasdair MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[6] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

[7] There are of course exceptions to this, Habermas for instance mentions him, but this is largely the extent of the engagement – an off-hand citation of brief mention. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 54, 67.

[8] Via his 'traditions of enquiry' approach to historical theoretical comparisons and dialogues. See Reiss Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas: A Proposed "Traditions of Enquiry"-Theoretic Turn Within Sociological Theory," Unpublished MA Thesis, (University of Calgary, 2018).

differentiation and connection between epistemic, ontological, and ethical concerns within the discipline, the role of recognition within sociological work, and more.

These and other themes offer a rich range of spaces where not only can MacIntyre offer tools to - and sometimes a beneficial re-focusing of - sociology, but sociology can provide further theoretical resources to MacIntyre. A dialogue is not a one-way street, and what I am proposing is to the benefit of all present. While some of the engagement will be critical (going both ways), the end-result will be to the benefit of both sociologists broadly, and Alasdair MacIntyre's work specifically. It will also represent one in a series of ongoing comparative, dialogical case-studies which will help widen the range of potential theoretical and methodological tools sociologists have at their disposal.[9]

1.1 The Social and Academic Value of this Work

The practical questions which ought to be raised during any dissertation should be addressed sooner rather than later: What research ethics concerns are involved in this work? How does this work relate to, and differ from, existing literature? What are the practical applications of this work? What will this proposed work provide to the wider academic world? I will answer these questions, to the degree possible in a proposal, in the order they have been presented.

1) There are no obvious ethical concerns toward any human or animal research participants in this work. The only concerns are those to the mental health of the author and the relationships they maintain in their life as they may be impacted by the pursuit of this work. This is something the author is fully aware of, and they will aim to balance the maintenance of their capacities and duties as a human being, with the pursuit of this work – especially given that an abandonment of

[9] See Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas"; Robert Stern, "Found or Sought? Hegel vs. MacIntyre on the Good Life and the Virtues," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 7th, 2022); Jennifer Herdt, "From Freedom to Final End: MacIntyre's Hegelian Aristotle," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 7th, 2022); Dean Moyar, "Saving the Enlightenment from Itself," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 7th, 2022); Kelvin Knight, "Thomistic Aristotelians on the Sociality of Reason," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 7th, 2022); Robert Pippin, "MacIntyre, Modernity, and Hegel," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 8th, 2022); Rahel Jaeggi, "Crisis and Rationality of Forms of Life," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 8th, 2022); Paul Blackledge, "Under the Shadow of Hegel: Alasdair MacIntyre's Concept of Practice," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 8th, 2022); Matthias Haase, "True Life," (presentation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Oct 8th, 2022).

one for the sake of the other would be a failure in the eyes of MacIntyre, and an ironic consequence of this work.

2) This work relates to a host of literature, most obviously the primary works of MacIntyre. In addition, the primary works of a broad range of sociologists, philosophers, and other social theorists. The complete range and the explanation of its impact will – for the sake of avoiding grotesque duplication – not be delved into here, but rather in the sections and subsections in which they will be engaged (specifically Section 4). A host of secondary analyses will also be drawn upon as the dissertation moves to questions focused on different themes, rather than different theorists (again, primarily in Section 4, but also in Sections 2 and 3 as a range of themes within sociological theory and MacIntyre's work will be touched upon). This work will differ from much of the work done on – or in relation to – MacIntyre however, in a series of core ways: i) There will be an important dialogical element underlying the comparative engagement and the proposal of critical adaptations or adoptions. ii) This work will be an extended engagement from within sociology with MacIntyre. While there have been sociologists and social theorists who have engaged with MacIntyre and some of his ideas,[10] they have largely been in passing,[11] either with MacIntyre as a footnote, or in an overly oppositional format of engagement, with dialogue being out of the question, and the conclusion of the engagement being the 'victory' of one side or the other. iii) While this work will be focused on MacIntyre, it will also represent a case-study which provides several metatheoretical and methodological tools for future interdisciplinary dialogues across a range of themes and approaches. For instance, the dialogical framework, combined with what can be learned from MacIntyre's 'traditions of inquiry' approach, is useful for a range of future works in sociological theory, the philosophy of the social sciences, and sociological methods. iv) This work will very clearly engage with the question of 'what is a discipline' within academia as it looks at the fluid borders of sociology and questions how they ought to be

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[10] Peter McMylor being most notable deployer of MacIntyre in a sociological context in recent years among these. See Peter McMylor, "Moral Philosophy and Economic Sociology: What MacIntyre Learnt from Polanyi," *International Review of Sociology*, 13, no. 2 (2002): 393-407; Peter McMylor, "Marxism and Christianity: Dependencies and Differences in Alasdair MacIntyre's Critical Social Thought," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 116, (August, 2008): 45-66; Peter McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*, (London, UK: Routledge, 2005); Peter McMylor, "MacIntyre and Sociology," in *Learning from MacIntyre*, (ed.) Ron Beadle and Geoff Moore, (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co., 2022). 235-56.

[11] Note for instance Habermas' two brief mentions in the entirety of the Theory of Communicative Action. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, (trans.) Thomas McCarthy, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 54, 67.

maintained or adapted in given circumstances. This is a useful question not just from an abstract philosophy of social sciences perspective, but from a pedagogical perspective as well, as many students are let down by unclear disciplinary boundaries as a necessary starting point for the questioning of those boundaries.

3) While immediately theoretical, there are practical consequences to this work. Many of the specific dialogues that will be pursued in this work will be practical in their nature or have practical applications in their deployment outside of theory. Indeed, while MacIntyre may seem to be disconnected from the 'real world,' his engagement with, and development of, practical philosophy contradicts this assumption. Much of his work engages with questions of ethics which are, by definition, practical. Virtues, for instance, are embedded in the actions of individuals, and are maintained by human action. The study of these practical occurrences makes for a range of clear, practical applicability of this work in future sociological research. In addition to this very applied element, there is the somewhat more abstract – but still practical – disciplinary concerns which will be raised in this work. Concerns about what the discipline of sociology ought to look like in terms of boundaries and avenues of dialogue are very practical when engaged from a pedagogical perspective. The practical possibilities continue, but elaboration further will be held until the specific engagements (especially in Section 4) commence.

4) This work represents, as noted above, not only a case-study for metatheoretical and methodological dialogue within sociology, but also a means for raising a host of critiques of how sociology has approached a range of topics to date. It will also provide a tool for addressing questions of pedagogy within sociology, and social theory generally. MacIntyre will represent a means of shaking up how sociologists analyze social institutions, theorize action, look at questions of knowledge and ethics, and a host of other questions within the discipline, but as already noted, this will not be a 'all-or-nothing' debate. MacIntyre will bring some things to the table, and sociologists will bring other things, and a dialogue will proceed from this engagement that will provide the possibility of critical development of ideas on both sides, such that the conclusion represents both a more MacIntyrean sociology, and more sociological MacIntyre.[12] For such a

[12] Regina Rini, "Abortion, Ultrasound, and Moral Persuasion," 6-7. This sincere and two-way engagement is precisely what Rini notes as necessary elements for determining whether we are morally obligated to being open to persuasion.

process to be successful in any manner it must first be clearly explained what is meant by 'dialogue.'

1.2 Dialogue as a Methodology

The core concept of dialogue which I will build on begins with Socrates, who notes that dialogue is a type of communication that has several requirements which mark it as different from other types of communication, among which are the requirement that dialogue cannot have too many active participants, as this would prevent dialogue from being effective in its aims.[13] Beyond this, dialogue must be oriented towards a cooperative engagement with a problem or idea – one is not trying to 'beat' an 'opponent' like in a typical rhetorical debate, but rather you are attempting to find common ground from which to move in a progressive direction in relation to the idea you are engaging with.[14] This requires a level of earnest engagement which is difficult to find in some more cynical and instrumental forms of communication.[15] There are several character virtues which Socrates notes as necessary to temper and enable a conversation to remain dialogical and not descend into an unproductive shouting match. These are *knowledge*, *frankness*, and *kind regard*.[16] Knowledge is required for any dialogue to commence and continue – it is a necessary starting point and building block. Even the identifying knowledge of a subject matter where one *does not have knowledge* is a sufficient starting point for dialogue.[17] Frankness is necessary to not get lost in an endless performance of posturing – sometimes to get to the truth of a matter, or move a discussion in a progressive direction, one must simply push forward by considering uncomfortable possibilities out loud. Lastly, kind regard is necessary to temper this frankness, preventing it from

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[13] Plato, "Gorgias," in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenus: The Dialogues of Plato Volume 1*, (trans.) Reginald E. Allen, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 474b.
[14] Plato, "Gorgias," 481c-d, "if men had no common feelings, some feeling one thing, some another, if instead each of us was affected in a way peculiar to himself and unshared by others, it would be no easy thing to indicate what we feel to one another."
[15] Daniela Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," *Philosophical Perspectives*, 33, (2019), 26-29. This is a necessary element which seems extant in parallel concerns raised by Dover in relation to criticism as not merely a negative phenomenon, but something much like the dialogue I am describing here – a potentially positive and progressive communicative technique which requires interpersonal engagement and a lack of manipulative or cynical positioning.
[16] Plato, "Gorgias," 487a.
[17] See the division between the things *we don't know we don't know*, the things *we don't know we know*, the things *we know we don't know*, and the things *we know we know* discussed briefly in Chapter 2, §2.8, fn. 465.

devolving into spite. Neither posturing nor viciousness are productive to dialogue by Socrates' account.

While specific interpretations of dialogue have expanded and developed since Socrates, many of these core elements have remained, exemplified by Gadamer when he notes that dialogue

> [I]s not the art of being able to win every argument. On the contrary, it is possible that someone practicing the art of [dialogue] … comes off worse in the argument in the eyes of those listening to it. …[Dialogue] proves its value because only the person who knows how to ask questions is able to persist in [their] questioning, which involves being able to preserve [their] orientation toward openness. *The art of questioning is the art of questioning ever further*.[18]

It is these core elements of the progressive development of knowledge through engagement with others, and the skills required to do so, that I am drawing on and building from, as are many who engage with questions of dialogue to this day.[19] Further elaboration is required however, and so I will address the *epistemic* and *ethical* elements of dialogue, how dialogue can move from the *first-person*, to the *third-person*, to more abstract questions of *dialogue between theories*, and even further how it can be useful for enabling *productive interdisciplinary engagement*.

1.2.(a) The Epistemic Elements of Dialogue

As a concept relating to communication, specifically communication aimed at questions of knowledge, dialogue represents before anything else an epistemic activity. The questions of knowledge are prefaced by (or perhaps synthesized with) questions of possible understanding of knowledge, and so dialogue is as much a hermeneutic process as anything else. Indeed, Socrates and those since him have seen dialogue as also an inherently progressive process, representing a means of identifying and moving beyond the problems of the hermeneutic circle.[20] The identification of the presence or absence of knowledge represents a starting point for a dialectical

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[18] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 375, emphasis added.
[19] See, for instance, Richard J. Bernstein's *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, (Philadelphia, PN, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 162. "[Dialogue] stresses not only the common bond and the genuine novelty that a turn in a conversation may take but the mutuality, the respect required, the genuine seeking to listen to and understand what the other is saying, the openness to risk and test our own opinions through such an encounter."
[20] This is hinted at by P. Christopher Smith, "Translator's Introduction," in *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, (trans.) P. Chrisopher Smith, (New Have: Yale University Press, 1980), ix-x. "[In dialogue] we move back and forth, often illogically, from one aspect of the thing to another, within a given context or situation which defines the limits of what we say to each other. And the success … is not at all to be measured by its logical rigor but by its effectiveness in bringing [to light] the essence of the subject matter."

engagement between the whole and part of a question, rather than a necessary epistemic quagmire which cannot be overcome. Dialogue then is, in addition to all its other elements, a shared quest for shared understanding:

> To conduct dialogue requires first of all that partners do not talk at cross purposes. Hence … the structure of question and answer. The first condition in the art of conversation is ensuring that the other person is with us. … To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented. It requires that one does not try to argue the other person down but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion. … [Dialogue] consists not in trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength. It is not the art of arguing (which can make a strong case out of a weak one).[21]

And it is this *shared* movement which I propose to bring to my engagement between the works of MacIntyre and a range of sociological theory. While dialogue is obviously an epistemic process, sociology's engagement with normativity requires us to pose a question: how useful is dialogue for engagement with questions of ethics? Before moving to the question of ethics, however, a concern which bridges the realms of epistemology and ethics must be noted. This is the principle of charity, which requires of those engaged in serious dialogue with others to proceed in good faith, assuming the most rational interpretation in the words of their dialogue partner(s).[22] This has been updated in a manner very in keeping with the Socratic method described above by Pruś and Sikora into the dialectical principle of charity, which requires not only the assuming of the most rational interpretation, but a confirmation or disconfirmation of this assumption by cross-reference to the other participants in the debate.[23] This principle is essential to any scholarly work which wishes to build upon, rather than merely destroy, previous arguments, and it is in the good faith of such a principle that I aim to proceed in my work herein.

1.2.(b) The Ethical Elements of Dialogue

Plato argues that true understanding necessitated a union between *logos* (word/language/knowledge) and *ergon* (action/deed). One could not truly say they understood something if they couldn't apply it in some way. Dialogue, and any question of knowledge, is then

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[21] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 375-76.
[22] Jakob Pruś and Piotr Sikora, "The Dialectical Principle of Charity: A Procedure for a Critical Discussion," *Argumentation*, 37, (2023): 578-80.
[23] Pruś and Sikora, "The Dialectical Principle of Charity," 583-98.

also a practical consideration, and this practical consideration will often have ethical elements to it. Again, this question of practical application is an aspect maintained by many who draw on the idea of dialogue beyond the Greeks:

> [A]pplication is an element of understanding itself. If … I put the legal historian and the practicing lawyer on the same level, I do not deny that the former has exclusively a 'contemplative,' and the other an exclusively practical, task. *Yet application is involved in the activities of both.*[24]

Despite this, the question of the ethical application of epistemic concerns or processes can often seem a bit hand-wavy to those 'on the ground.' And here we face the classic division within sociology (to name just one discipline) between 'theory' and 'practice.'[25] While it can be argued that theory *is* a practice, and necessary for any form of praxis, to assuage the concerns of those practically engaged with questions of ethics I will elaborate further on the practical nature of theory throughout §2.1, §2.5, as well as §3.2.(d) and throughout Chapter 4.

Aside from engaging with ethical *concepts* (which can proceed in a manner not dissimilar from epistemic concepts), dialogue is useful for enabling the type of engagement between people who are embedded in all questions of ethics.[26] The virtues not only required by dialogue, but promoted by it, are useful for the identification of ethical concerns *and* their resolution. Sociology's concern with the tangible interaction between individuals and groups will not be disregarded by drawing on dialogue as both a theoretical and practical tool. But Socrates, Gadamer, and others all note that dialogue is at its base an intimate process, possible only in the smallest of social settings. How then is it possible to point it towards more abstract theoretical uses?

1.2.(c) First-Person vs. Third-Person vs. Theory-to-Theory Dialogue

Much of rhetoric – academic or otherwise – proceeds as a matter of course as a monologue. One is simply 'reading from a sheet,' whether that sheet is in front of them or in their mind. One is stuck in the first-person – the audience is a faceless mass sitting in the background. This is precisely

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[24] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xxix, emphasis added.
[25] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 125. A division, it is important to note, that the Greeks didn't see the same way we do, as pointed out by MacIntyre and others, as theory itself was seen as a form of praxis.
[26] Regina Rini, "Abortion, Ultrasound, and Moral Persuasion," *Philosopher's Imprint* 18, no. 6, (2018): 1. People who ought to be open to moral persuasion insofar as they are moral agents respecting the moral agency of other persons.

one of the things Socrates sought to avoid in his promotion of dialogue. The second someone asks a question, however, the speaker has an interlocutor, and is forced – however briefly – out of the first-person. They do not necessarily take on a third-person perspective of their own position, however. This is well-noted by MacIntyre who points out that

> What agents need, if they are not to be the victims of deception and self-deception is … to see and understand themselves as perceptive others see and understand them. What they need is to judge and to act from a first-person standpoint informed by a kind of practical self-knowledge that can only be acquired from a third-person standpoint. Their confidence in the outcome of their own deliberative activities will be well founded only if it resembles in important respects the confidence that someone else might have in that outcome.[27]

Dialogue is necessarily a process which enables this drawing out of the individual into engagement with a third-person perspective. The drawing out of the speaker, and the necessary earnest engagement that is required to make the engagement dialogical, is parallel to what Rini calls the 'openness to persuasion' which represents a moral obligation for individuals and is a matter of "*engaging* with reasons." This engagement does not imply an automatic acceptance, but it "requires at least [an] understanding and sincere evaluation."[28] The back-and-forth engagement such 'openness' implies can take different forms. Rini categorizes argumentation against, or acceptance of, the position(s) of the other as evidence of engagement caused by this morally obligated openness to persuasion.[29] The satisfaction of such persuasion for Rini is the changing of one's behaviour *because* one has changed their mind – it cannot simply be one or the other.[30] While this may seem somewhat a dualist position, with one either changing their mind or refusing to change their mind, Gadamer provides room for a dialectical synthesis, what he calls a 'fusion of horizons,'[31] which takes place within productive dialogue. This 'fusion of horizons' helps develop what MacIntyre calls a "third-person standpoint that we have become able to make our own,"[32] and provides the necessary objectivity which rescues the agent from "imprisonment within her or

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[27] MacIntyre, Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 157.
[28] Rini, "Abortion, Ultrasound, and Moral Persuasion," 4, emphasis in original.
[29] Rini, "Abortion, Ultrasound, and Moral Persuasion," 3
[30] Rini, "Abortion, Ultrasound, and Moral Persuasion," 5.
[31] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 600-1.
[32] MacIntyre, Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity, 161.

his subjectivity."[33] This is similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's claim that "[u]nderstanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other,"[34] arguing that

> The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background.[35]

This engagement with the other – for both MacIntyre and Bakhtin – recognizes the 'background of language'[36] as well as the 'background of ideas'[37] which need to be engaged with to fully understand one's own position (in the third-person), let alone the position of another.

If dialogue is such a person-to-person engagement, how then can dialogue be considered a tool to bring ideas together? The concept of theory-to-theory dialogue is one which at first may seem counter to the intersubjective engagement described by Socrates and others but is something which must necessarily be elaborated if dialogue is to be a useful tool for the broad questions I aim to engage with and theories I intend to draw on. To do so we must turn to what I consider the *exegetical possibility* in dialogue.

1.2.(d) (Inter)Disciplinary Dialogue and the Problem of Translatability

Such a possibility requires one *to approach ideas as if they were texts, and traditions as if they were languages*. This exegetical approach is one promoted by both Gadamer[38] and MacIntyre,[39] and raises important questions necessary for any dialogue between theories (let alone between disciplines) to be productive. Foremost of these questions is the question of translatability.

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[33] MacIntyre, Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity, 162.
[34] Mikhail M. Bahktin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, Second Edition, (Eds.), V. B. Leitch, P. Simon, A. Falk, C. Sullivan, M. Johnson, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010): 1092.
[35] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 1093.
[36] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 1092.
[37] What MacIntyre might call the 'prereflective background.' See Chapter 2, §2.8 for elaboration on this concept.
[38] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 600-1.
[39] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 370-88.

Translation between languages is necessary for many texts. But so too is translation between the horizon of the text—or theory—and the reader. Bahktin highlights the necessary interconnection between different linguistic and ideological positions well when he notes how

> [N]o living word relates to its object in a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate. … The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others [and] intersects with yet [more].[40]

It is just this 'weaving in and out' with alien words, creating the 'dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment' which raises the question of translation.

Successful translation entails several concerns which one must keep an eye to. The first is *fidelity* or faithfulness to the original meaning of a concept or text: "It is sometimes said that a translation ideally should produce the same effect on its readers that the original was meant to produce on the audience for which it was intended. Such a translation would be completely faithful."[41] This faithfulness should be supported by *neutrality*: "Interpretive translations, like newspaper editorials, have their value; but they decide in advance issues on which students may reasonable differ [and] … be invited to make up his or her own mind."[42] This in turn requires a certain kind of *literalness*:

> Literalness … marks a translation which lets the original text show through clearly enough so that a fair estimate of the syntax and vocabulary of [the original] can be formed. Literalness, it may be observed, cannot be obtained by mechanical substitution: *chemin de fer* does not mean road of iron, but railroad, and *didaoni diken* does not mean to give justice, but to be punished. Nor is literalness obtained by translating [word-to-word] on every occasion; this is merely a variant of simple substitution, and it tends to produce [unintelligibility]. But the claim that a translation is false to the meaning of the text implies a claim about what the text means. So literalness requires interpretation after all. We are thus lead from faithfulness toward neutrality, from neutrality toward literalness, and from

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[40] Bahktin, "Discourse in the Novel," 1088.
[41] Reginald E. Allen, "Preface," in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenus: Dialogues of Plato, Volume 1*, (trans.) R. E. Allen, (Bethany, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), xi.
[42] Allen, "Preface," xii.

> literalness back towards faithfulness. Accuracy of translation involves all three elements.[43]

While these practical considerations of translation play a role not only in physical texts, but in the ideas they maintain – and indeed in ideas *qua* ideas – MacIntyre raises additional concerns around the translation of ideas between traditions of inquiry, social spaces, and places in time.

Dialogue between traditions of inquiry is possible for MacIntyre through the translation of the ideas of one tradition into the 'language' of the other. The level of translatability differs across history and social circumstance. For MacIntyre there are some concepts which have direct, or a high levels of, translatability. For instance, words or concepts shared between different linguistic or epistemic groups due to a shared origin (for instance, the shared use of the Greek word 'Atom' in German and English) represents a space of direct translatability. There are also words or concepts which are highly translatable, but don't represent a 1:1 conceptual comparison. For instance, 'Gut Nacht' and 'good night' both mean the same thing directly, but the former can be used as a greeting, whereas the latter cannot.[44] There are also concepts which require the *interpretation* which Allen notes above, or 'translation by linguistic innovation.'[45] This is often common in cases of low translatability. Even lower, however, are concepts which are fully untranslatable, which can only be engaged with if adopted wholesale from a different tradition.[46] This of course can cause issues within a tradition, as the adoption of such a concept may bring with it implicit critiques of elements of the adopting tradition. Inter-traditional dialogue (or interdisciplinary dialogue) is possible, and history shows it as such, by Macintyre's account, with the problematization of elements internal to a discipline or tradition being the starting point of a dialogue which can lead to the overcoming of the problem(s) in question. This is phenomenon not only taken up by MacIntyre, but also by Thomas Kuhn,[47] who MacIntyre was critically engaging

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[43] Allen, "Preface," xii.
[44] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 4.
[45] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 5; MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 73. MacIntyre specifically points to "the exercise of philosophical and moral imagination" in the overcoming the limitations which might render different traditions sterile when encountering new ideas or critiques – whether internal or external. The possibility presents itself here for a connection with C. Wright Mills' idea of a *sociological imagination*, as many parallels exist.
[46] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 5.
[47] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

with while developing his thoughts in this area,[48] and with whom, according to Nicholas, there is still room for fruitful dialogue.[49] Regardless, dialogue is possible at such a scale as between disciplines and traditions by MacIntyre's account,[50] precisely because traditions are not merely defined in terms of fundamental agreements, but they also represent "an ongoing argument among insiders, as well as with outsiders, about those agreements"[51] – something which will be elaborated in Chapter 2, §2.1.

Dialogue, thus, represents an epistemic and ethical tool, which not only provides a means to engage with epistemic and ethical questions, but also which helps forge increasingly capable persons, groups, and indeed disciplines, by the adoption and deployment of a host of virtues. All of this aims – in addition to whatever question is being asked – at the flourishing of the academic, as well as the wider human, community.[52]

1.3 Challenges to Dialogical Approaches, and Responses Thereto

To quote Walter Kaufmann, "[s]ound method requires that we do not merely marshal the evidence for our own views: we must go out of our way also to confront evidence that on the face of it contradicts our views … and alternative constructions."[53] There exist such challenges to dialogical approaches to theory across a range of disciplines and historical periods. How these challenges are understood and faced depends in large part on the position one takes. My position is a synthetic one that I am developing for this work, as it takes influence from a range of theories. It is important here to note some of the internal challenges my position represents before addressing any external challenges. Prior to this however I wish to note clearly the concept of dialogue as I am synthetically

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[48] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15-23; Stephen P. Turner, "MacIntyre and the Philosophy of the Social Sciences," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed). Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 80-82, 87-88; J. L. A. Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed). Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104;

[49] Jeffery L. Nicholas, Reason, Tradition, and the Good: MacIntyre's Tradition-Constituted Reason and Frankfurt School Critical Theory, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 19-13, 135.

[50] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 73-79

[51] Nicholas, Reason, Tradition, and the Good: MacIntyre's Tradition-Constituted Reason and Frankfurt School Critical Theory, 135.

[52] Elaboration of MacIntyre's concept of human flourishing will be provided in Chapter 2, §2.6 and §2.7.

[53] Walter Kaufmann, "Preface to the Third Edition," *in Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), xiv.

presenting it, based on a host of sources, not limited to Socrates, Plato, Gadamer, MacIntyre, and others.

Dialogue – as proposed by this work – represents a synthesis of these various influences which allows for the rational and progressive development (albeit not always unidirectionally progressive)[54] of understanding through engagement with others, whether those others be individuals or, more abstractly, traditions of thought, and whether the 'one' doing the engaging be an individual or likewise a tradition of thought. This engagement demands what MacIntyre calls a *perpetual openness to falsification of one's own position*, but it also demands what Socrates would say is a shared desire and capacity for working together, with a shared object of focus, in progressing closer to a better understanding of that shared object of focus – be it an account of truth or the best theory for explaining how selfhood develops in the contemporary age. Much like the traits listed as essential by Socrates, this form of communication must be cooperative, earnest, and critical – but in a positive manner. It will take on a form similar to what Dover calls 'interactive criticism,' which would be 1) *open-ended*, temporally speaking, as it does not seek a quick resolution but rather recognizes itself as part of an ongoing process of debate; 2) *symmetrical rather than role-differentiated*, insofar as the participants are viewed as co-communicators, with one not talking down to another from a position of moral or epistemic authority; 3) *dialogical rather than monological* – communication must go both ways; 4) *dynamic rather than peremptory*, as the question(s) being engaged with are seen as open, and yet-to-be-settled, rather than pre-decided; and 5) *inquisitive*, as there ought to be a shared desire to properly understand the position of the other(s).[55] Dover puts it well when she states that

> The interactive critic would regard her initial interpersonal address as part of a larger practice of critical ethical inquiry whose course is neither fixed nor predictable, and which, though it often takes an adversarial form, is nonetheless ultimately cooperative in the sense that we should aspire to undertake it together in

[54] Christophe Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationalities of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Journal of Philosophical Research*, 40, (2015): 133-34. This understanding of the teleological potential for rational interaction and growth I draw from MacIntyre, who – unlike Gadamer – claims that there can be certain traditions which prove to be better, more accurate, more truthful, or less false, than others, escaping one of the traps of relativism present in Gadamer's prejudicial account of interaction.

[55] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 43-44. Dover notes a sixth point which I am not including here and which will be discussed below.

> an egalitarian spirit—though not necessarily in the sense that we should expect or even hope to end up in the same place at the end of the day.[56]

These 'interactive critics' would be in the case I am presenting the participant(s) in the dialogue I am proposing. And while this, and many other approaches focus heavily on the person-to-person element implicit in dialogical approaches, it is clear in Dover's account – as it is in Gadamer's and MacIntyre's – that such engagements can take place on a larger scale, in both time and with ranges of participants, as noted above.

1.3.(a) MacIntyre and Gadamer

While I have thus far used MacIntyre and Gadamer in a cooperative fashion, there are a few essential conflicts between the two[57] – the core being their different positions in relation to language[58] – which need to be addressed to make sense of my synthetic position. Gadamer's hermeneutic position, strongly influenced by Heidegger's philosophy of Dasein, saw hermeneutics itself

> [A]s a discipline concerning not only domains of human activity, but rather man himself as an interpreting being, a being caught up in interpretation. Still more precisely for the two German thinkers, interpretation is an event rather than an act. That in turn is a corollary of their conception of language as a universal medium of all understanding.[59]

This understanding of language as a universal medium, from a Heideggerian point of view, represents a "shift from a conception of language as a human capacity" to a focus on "the power of language itself, where being dwells."[60] This results in an abandonment of both hermeneutics and metaphysics.[61]

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[56] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 44.
[57] Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 265. "From Gadamer I have learned a great deal about intellectual and moral tradition. I am very close to all in Gadamer that comes from Aristotle; that which comes from Heidegger I reject. I think that Heidegger was not at all in error when he discerned a close relationship between his own views and the philosophical politics of National Socialism."
[58] Christophe Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Journal of Philosophical Research*, 40, (2015), 117-18.
[59] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 119.
[60] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 119.
[61] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 119.

Gadamer moved away from this singular focus on language *qua* language, drawing on the power of dialogue:[62]

> [N]o conceptual language, not even what Heidegger called the 'language of metaphysics,' represents an unbreakable constraint upon thought if the thinker will allow himself or herself to trust language; that is to say, if he or she engages in dialogue with other thinkers and other ways of thinking. … I have tried to conceive the primordial phenomenon and nature of language as dialogue.[63]

Despite his rejection of Heidegger's singular position, language still represents the universal medium, just one which is more dialogical – what he called the "art of living dialogue"[64] which he draws from philosophy's Socratic origins. For Gadamer, the opposition between language and 'reality' must be abandoned. Rather, language is "the element human experience is formed and developed in," and reality is "always already eminently linguistic."[65] Language is for Gadamer not a means of describing a world, but a mimetic game we are all caught up in, it is an end-in-itself. Indeed, while the instrumental conception of language sees language as human, "[f]or Gadamer, it is rather man who is linguistic."[66] So while Gadamer moves towards dialogue, away from Heidegger, the result is the same "for both of them, language has the last word."[67] Despite the metaphysical elements to Socrates and Plato's dialogical project, Gadamer attempts to give dialogue itself the spotlight, ignoring the role dialogue can play in addressing metaphysical questions. MacIntyre points this out when he notes that what this approach cannot address is things like language which points beyond language, or when interpretations break down – when language comes between us and the world. These all raise metaphysical questions - questions Heidegger ignores entirely and Gadamer sidesteps through ad hoc means.[68]

MacIntyre brings, among other things, questions of metaphysics into conversation with questions of dialogue. This is valuable not only here, looking at the role dialogue will play in comparing, contrasting, and progressing the theories I will engage with – it is also valuable as one of the things I argue MacIntyre offers sociology. MacIntyre's critique of Gadamer's focus on

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[62] Graeme Nicholson, "Gadamer-A Dialectic Without End," *Symposium*, vol. 6, no. 2, (2002): 181-193.
[63] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," in *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of Later Writings*, (ed) Richard E. Palmer, 156-191, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 160.
[64] Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," 160.
[65] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 120.
[66] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 121.
[67] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 121.
[68] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 122.

language in large part aims at Gadamer's masking of the *theoria* proper to metaphysics which is present in the dialogical elements Gadamer takes from Plato and Aristotle.[69]

MacIntyre does not disregard language, he merely notes the metaphysical places language can take us which contradicts the claims that language is the be-all and end-all of human existence: "What he calls the maturity of natural languages, which makes them available for a truly metaphysical investigation, is not given at the outset. It is, notably, the fruit of the work of poets and philosophers. But it is possible."[70] So language can evolve in its breadth, depth, and direction towards metaphysical concerns which exist *a priori* to a given language's use. This is valuable to bring to sociological concerns, as despite the constructivist root that runs through much sociological theory, there remains an *a priori* parallel to Aristotle's claim that society pre-exists the individual. Indeed, *the things being studied are only being studied because they were there prior to the study*. While valid arguments can be made about the impact the observer has on the observed, the fact remains that there was something to observe prior to its observation. This realist element underlies many of MacIntyre's positions throughout his work, and represents a space of translatability between MacIntyre and much of sociology.[71]

Despite this difference, there is similarity between Gadamer and MacIntyre which helps bridge the gap that may seem to form in the synthetic account of dialogue I am giving. For instance, Gadamer's account of tradition is similar in many ways to MacIntyre's. While there is an epistemic and ethical expectation in the field of human relations that each of us be "recognized for his own sake, as an end and not as a means," the same for Gadamer applies to traditions, creating a dialogical openness, which is "such that the tradition is recognized not only as other but also as having something to tell me, as being able to call me into question."[72] This parallel's MacIntyre's account of traditions coming together, creating spaces of mutual critique and growth, with the potential for both overcoming and defeat.[73] This Gadamerian openness to 'other traditions' would

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[69] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 123.
[70] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 123.
[71] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Truth as a Good: A Reflection of *Fides et Ratio,*" in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206, emphasis original. "It is insofar as the mind's thoughts about how [and why] things are agrees with how [and why] things are *because* these particular thoughts are determined by how [and why] these particular realities are … that the mind may be said to be adequate to those realities."
[72] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 126.
[73] For elaboration see Chapter 2, §2.1.

seem to represent a necessary starting point in any traditional interaction accounted for by MacIntyre. Indeed, Gadamer's concept of a 'fusion of horizons' seems to parallel MacIntyre's presentation of different traditions engaging with one another and providing – through history – a space for the birth of new, synthetic traditions, and new members speaking the new 'languages' of these new traditions. Encountering the 'other' and dialoguing with them is essential to what Gadamer calls *Bildung*, or being cultured.[74] Likewise, external engagement beyond the tradition one inhabits for MacIntyre is often necessary for overcoming the issues within that tradition that that tradition is incapable of addressing for a host of possible reasons.[75]

While Gadamer speaks of dialogue, and MacIntyre speaks of a "perpetual openness toward falsification,"[76] both aim at a process of overcoming and growing – both theoretically and practically – which aids in the project I am laying out here: a dialogical engagement between MacIntyre in particular, and a range of sociological theory which helps keep both MacIntyre and sociology open to falsification through dialogue.

1.3.(b) Dialogue and the 'End of History'

One of the critiques often aimed at dialogue as a process is based on its Socratic origin as a *directional process*. A theme taken up by many throughout history, including Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel, Marx, and MacIntyre, and one critiqued or rejected outright but many others, is that there is a direction to history and to dialogues which take place within it. The telos of history is as *some* Hegelians have called it, the End of History, a place in time and space where all processes of *Aufheben* had concluded. For Plato, dialogue aimed at a greater understanding of the Forms which in turn aim toward an understanding of the Good - a necessary prerequisite to the living out of the good life. This is something noted by many contemporary theorists across a range of traditions, including but not limited to Fricker,[77] Bagley,[78] Cohen,[79] and others, who frame processes of debate

[74] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 128.
[75] See Chapter 2, §2.1.
[76] Rouard, "MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," 129, see also 131-32.
[77] Miranda Fricker, "What's the Point of Blame? A Paradigm Based Explanation," *Noûs*, 55, no. 1, (2016): 173.
[78] Benjamin Bagley, "Properly Proleptic Blame," *Ethics* 127, no. 4, (2017): 853.
[79] G. A. Cohen, "Casting the First Stone: Who Can, and Who Can't, Condemn the Terrorists?" In *Finding Oneself in the Other*, (ed) Michael Otsuka, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 118.

and criticism as consensus-building mechanisms toward some end which are at least in some sense achievable, even if not immediately.[80]

Regardless of the specifics of the telos, the concept of a telos to dialogue is something critiqued by many. For instance, Dover notes – in the construction of her concept of 'interactive criticism,' that the critic must acknowledge the "ways in which our ethical understandings are, always will be, and—arguably—always ought to be contestable and contested."[81] Importantly, the sixth category Dover lists when laying out the elements of interactive criticism is its egalitarian, rather than authoritarian, nature precluding any critic from "appointing themselves representatives of the moral community at large."[82] While I would agree that no one should act in such an authoritarian manner, I – parallel, I believe, to Plato, Gadamer, and MacIntyre - am arguing that dialogue allows space for authorita*tive* engagement, so long as that is tempered by the virtues noted by Socrates and aimed not viciously at the co-participants but cooperatively at the subject of dialogue. Differences in levels of knowledge – and the authority one has to speak on a particular subject – perpetually differs in all engagements, and this should not prevent dialogue. In other words, the egalitarian nature of dialogue ought not to mean dialogue is only possible between two or more participants with the exact same level and kind of understanding – in such a utopian case dialogue would be impossible as the shared epistemic habitus would preclude the necessity for debate. The participants would simply agree on a definition of the situation without need for debate. Some telos – however unclear – is necessary for dialogue. Whether it be a universal telos in the form of some 'End of History,' a more personal telos like Plato's good life, or a telos beyond singular definition like MacIntyre's account, where progress is possibly within and between traditions of inquiry, both by a larger historical account and by an account given by the standards of the traditions themselves.[83] This account recognizes that this telos is not something necessarily *pulling us* towards it in the metaphysical manner of the Greeks, but rather is something towards which this progress can aim, again, even if it is not unidirectional (as history is full of 'whoopsies' and backtracks – Nazi Germany being one example, and the supremacy of VHS over Betatape being another).

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[80] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 44-45.
[81] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 45.
[82] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 45.
[83] Without becoming necessarily deterministic. This will be elaborated on variously throughout Chapters 2, 4, and 7.

Dover raises another interestingly similar critique to Marx's about the idealism of the Young Hegelians when she notes the lack of 'worldmaking power' that criticism (or in my case, dialogue) has when taking place on an intimate, interpersonal level.[84] While an argument could be made for the constitutive element that interpersonal critique plays in larger 'worldmaking' (through concepts like ideal-types,[85] and Gidden's account of the individual elements of structuration[86]), this would sidestep my actual concern for dialogue in this work, which is exactly the "high-brow social and cultural criticism" which Dover herself recognizes as being impacted by such 'worldmaking' consequences of dialogue and critique.[87] While the 'bottom-up' development of ethical concepts and vocabularies is importantly noted by Dover,[88] and is something which is just as applicable within social theory (i.e., inductive vs. deductive development and deployment of theories), it is an issue of secondary concern here. However, it will be touched on again in Chapter 2, especially in §2.5 & §2.10.(d).

1.4 MacIntyre: A History of Ideas

Alasdair MacIntyre represents not just a particular individual, or a series of ideas, but a figurehead of a tradition of inquiry which reaches back to the origins of Western philosophy. While his positions have changed in various ways over time[89] (as have any who have been active in philosophy or social theory and are reflective enough to be critiqued and critique themselves), there are several core theories and themes which have emerged and cemented in his work despite critique. To make the sociological traditions and theories we will later engage with intelligible in relation to MacIntyre's work, I will elaborate many of MacIntyre's core concepts in Chapter 2. Before this however, I will briefly contextualize these ideas in relation to the history of MacIntyre's academic work, which spans seven decades. This will provide the theoretical grounding for our

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[84] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 45.
[85] Discussed further in Chapter 5, §5.2.(a).
[86] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022), 17.
[87] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 45.
[88] Dover, "Criticism as Conversation," 46, 49.
[89] The range and breadth of MacIntyre's work is beyond any single work. For some good brief overviews of ranges of his work, see Kelvin Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) K. Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 276-94; Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, "Introduction: the Unknown Alasdair MacIntyre," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (ed.) P. Blackledge and N. Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009): xiii-lxiv; Mark C. Murphy, "Introduction," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 1-9.

later discussion in Chapter 8 of what (and how) MacIntyre might offer dialogically useful tools for sociology as a discipline, as well as the question of what (and how) sociological theory may likewise provide tools for the improvement and furthering of MacIntyre's theories. The aim of this work as a whole is to be a dialogical engagement between MacIntyre, the tradition(s) he synthesizes, and sociology as a discipline. This necessitates I address as well as the strengths, the potential weakness and various challenges levied against MacIntyre, and while this will also be summarized in Chapter 8, I will be raising and addressing critiques throughout the entire work as they are relevant to what is being discussed.

There are many ways which MacIntyre's work, and the development of his ideas, could be charted. Some could i) differentiate historical periods, tracing MacIntyre's work by the decade.[90] Others might ii) try to define a 'mature' program in MacIntyre's work, focusing on the development of ideas, and distinguishing his older work from his newer.[91] Still others might iii) pay little attention to time, or concept of 'maturity,' and simply trace given ideas (and how they might represent responses to other ideas).[92] And some may iv) seek to view the entirety of MacIntyre's work as a holistic program, wherein all (or most) aspects are present in some form in his most recent ideas.[93]

Should my work be aimed at a focused engagement between a specific concept of MacIntyre's and some specific field of sociology – or a specific theorist or concept – then perhaps I would take up form iii. However, this work is aimed at a broader application of MacIntyre across a discipline-wide range of sociological theory, and so I will be drawing on concepts he has

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[90] Stephen P. Turner, "MacIntyre in the Province of the Philosophy of the Social Science," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 70-80.

[91] Jean Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 38-69; Mark C. Murphy, "MacIntyre's Political Philosophy," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 152-75. Porter defines MacIntyre's work from *After Virtue* onwards as part of his 'mature philosophical program,' and Murphy

[92] J. L. A. Garcia, "Moderni(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 94-113. Garcia represents the development of MacIntyre's moral philosophy as largely a response to, and development beyond, G. E. M. Anscombe's famous 1958 article 'Modern Moral Philosophy.'

[93] David Solomon, "MacIntyre and Contemporary Moral Philosophy," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 114-51. Solomon notes the continuity of MacIntyre's ethical thought, and the range of influences throughout his life which have continued to influence his work: "[a]lthough his views have developed in important ways, there are a number of themes that have not changed. Indeed … the continuities in MacIntyre's ethical thought are more important than the changes in it." (114). Further, MacIntyre's "later work continues to emphasize themes clearly enunciated in his early work." (120).

developed across his entire career. While this may be more focused on certain times than others, I seek to draw on MacIntyre's work as a *living tradition,* complex and ongoing, more in the scheme of the aforementioned form iv. Following this – as well as MacIntyre's considerations of our life activities being conceived of as quests,[94] and our lives as necessarily narrative phenomena which make no sense without the context of a story[95] – I will prepare the reader for such a quest by telling a story: the story of MacIntyre's life as an academic. My goal is not to write a biography, but rather to cover a brief history of MacIntyre's work to help trace out the development of his thought before turning to an elaboration of core concepts in Chapter 2 which – while not covering the entirety of his work – will provide recurring reference points throughout the remainder of this work.

Despite my holistic approach to representing MacIntyre, it is clear that there are 'periods' which can be roughly identified in his work which are worth denoting for the purpose of seeing how well-connected ideas from one might be applicable to the ideas of another. Throughout the entirety of his career MacIntyre has engaged with a range of traditions of thought, including those influenced by Marx, scholasticism, Aquinas, Aristotle, Heidegger, Weber and others – some of which he has overcome and left behind, but many of which have represented components of an ongoing praxis in the development of his thought.[96] I have, for the sake of both space and clarity, broken my brief summary of MacIntyre's intellectual career into three components: the 'pre-*After Virtue*' period, the '*After Virtue* project,'[97] and the 'Thomistic-Aristotelian period.' I have done so because in the period *before* his work on *After Virtue* MacIntyre was, in many ways, very much attempting to 'find himself,' intellectually speaking. He was a Marxist and more *explicitly* engaged with Marx than he was in later years in this period, for instance, despite having his ears open to a range of Aristotelian influences. It was in this period that we see many of the influences which remain present in the 'mature' MacIntyre. A clear shift occurred in the production of *After Virtue,*

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[94] MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 219.
[95] See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 207-8, 215-21; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 3, 233-42; along with many other of his works, especially within *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays Volume 1*.
[96] Kelvin Knight, "After Tradition: Heidegger *or* MacIntyre, Aristotle *and* Marx," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 39. MacIntyre's exposure to Thomist, Marxist and Heideggerian thought occurred essentially simultaneously in 1947. By praxis here I mean the dialectical movement between the engagement with theoretical traditions, and their deployment in his ongoing work with an eye to practical concerns, which in turn inform a re-evaluation of said theoretical frameworks. Some of these concepts and traditions have, as noted, been dropped, and some have been adapted in dialectical response to testing under such practical fields of consideration.
[97] A phrase borrowed from Mark C. Murphy. See "Introduction," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

which kicked off what many people have called 'the *After Virtue* project,' which MacIntyre himself has identified as a continuing project which he has engaged in since.[98] While this might be an easy place to divide MacIntyre's work, (pre- and post-*After Virtue*), MacIntyre has noted,[99] and others have also identified,[100] that *After Virtue* did not fully represent the cementation of what might be considered his mature Thomistic-Aristotelian position, which can be traced to around 1985.

1.4.(a) The Pre-After Virtue Period: 1949-1977

Beginning with his Master's thesis – *The Significance of Moral Judgments*[101] – MacIntyre's work moved to cover a range areas, including but not limited to ethics, politics, and moral psychology,[102] the philosophy of social science,[103] epistemology and the history of ideas,[104] among a range of other pursuits that make up any academic career over half a century.[105] Many of these themes are not distinctly separable from each other in MacIntyre's work,[106] and so it is important to keep in mind that almost all of his work touches on these topics in some manner, with only a focus being aimed slightly in this direction or that. This is part of the reason that I believe a holistic appreciation to

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[98] MacIntyre, in Alex Bavister-Gould, "The Uniqueness of *After Virtue* (or 'Against Hindsight')," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 55.
[99] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Preface," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), vii.
[100] Bavister-Gould, "The Uniqueness of *After Virtue* (or 'Against Hindsight')," 55-56.
[101] Solomon, "MacIntyre and Contemporary Moral Philosophy," 118-19. This thesis is unpublished but focused on critiques of intuitionist, emotivist, and naturalist metaethics, especially concerning their paradigmatic deployment of specific moral arguments in a manner which oversimplifies moral discussion, and a tentative proposition of how a "logic of moral language in use" might work.
[102] To list some: Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007b); Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1978); MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, (Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 2014); MacIntyre, After Virtue.
[103] To list some: Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Unconscious: A Conceptual Analysis*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001b).
[104] To list some: Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007a); MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008b); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, (London, UK: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2001a).
[105] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, (Bungay, UK: Wm. Collins & Co Ltd, 1970).
[106] Solomon, "MacIntyre and Contemporary Moral Philosophy," 114. "[The] difficulties in interpreted MacIntyre are compounded by the fact that he does not neatly separate his work in ethics from his work in action theory, philosophy of language, and philosophy of the social sciences. And notoriously, his systematic views in ethics are developed against the background of a rich and controversial account of the history of ethics."

MacIntyre is not only most useful, but most representative of him as an academic. Despite this, MacIntyre himself acknowledges the "badly organized, sometimes fragmented and often frustrating and messy enquiries" which made up this period.[107] This period was typified by a series of inquiries which were pursued "in a piecemeal way, focusing first on this problem and then on that, in a mode characteristic of much of analytic philosophy."[108] One of the primary struggles of this period was MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism between 1945 and 1963,[109] and his attempt to overcome the problems of both the 'scientific Marxism' of the Stalinist Soviet Union, and the 'humanistic Marxism' of the British New Left.[110] While there were a range of failures in each of these approaches, MacIntyre's uneasiness about the ultimate adequacy of Marxism in part stemmed from the over-focus on the 'is' – in the case of scientific Marxism – and the 'ought' of humanistic Marxism[111] – a problem which was inherited by Weber, despite his critiques of Marx, in his fact/value distinction.

Scientific Marxism faces on MacIntyre's account two core problems. First, to take Marx's work simply as a series of social scientific laws turns it into a tool for whoever may be in power to manipulate social change, and this is precisely what Stalinist Marxists attempted to do. Because of the lack of engagement with questions of morality, "that perspective was entirely value-free, [and] there were no ways of adjusting the levers and pushing buttons that could be morally called into question."[112] This was an important factor which led to the problem of Stalinist Marxism being incapable of being internally critiqued from a Marxist perspective: what MacIntyre called the 'moral emptiness' of Marxism. On the other hand, however, was the 'scientific emptiness' of Marxism: there were not "social scientific laws available to be discovered that would enable the

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[107] MacIntyre, in Mark C. Murphy, "Introduction," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1. While MacIntyre that the beginning of the '*After Virtue* project' began with the critical self-reflection which began in 1971, I have chosen the period of writing *After Virtue* starting in 1977 as the dividing point for the sake of simplicity.
[108] MacIntyre, "Preface," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007a), viii.
[109] Jason Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Tradition and Disagreement," in *Philosophical Profiles in the Theory of Communication*, (ed.) Jason Hannan, (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012): 387-88.
[110] Murphy, "Introduction," 3.
[111] Murphy, "Introduction," 4.
[112] Murphy, "Introduction," 4.

would-be planner to adjust the levers to bring about the downfall of capitalism and the rise of socialism."[113]

While Humanistic Marxism sought to focus on the question of the moral within Marxism, they failed in a manner similar to the many relativisms which developed in the last century: morality was reduced to opinion. Their critiques were not based in a Marxian account of the moral, they were simply Marxists (and often ex-Marxists) who reacted negatively to the horrors of Stalinism, and grasping for the nearest means of moral condemnation caught the dominant liberal framework. And so this 'humanistic turn,' which sought to challenge Stalinism from within Marxism – ended up being on MacIntyre's account the assertion of a morality based in liberal values. This in turn resulted in either a utilitarian argument over the facts of the matter (rather than moral questions), or an assertion of individual opinion *as* the sum of morality.[114] And if "all that is going on in such criticism is the critic's reaffirmation of his or her disapproval of the Stalinist's techniques, why on earth should anyone listen to [them]?"[115]

While the Stalinist failed to recognize the role of a shared human nature, submitting all to the so-called 'objective laws' of history and the command economy,[116] the Humanist Marxist influenced by liberal values in this manner "has no right to criticise Stalinism,"[117] as their condemnation is based in a "separation of morality from history, from desire discovered through the discovery of that common human nature which history shows as emerging, leav[ing] morality without any basis."[118] The error for the Humanist Marxist by MacIntyre's account is that such baselessness is "not a logical necessity for morality, as the liberal would have it."[119] Marxists wishing to be critical of Stalinism must recognize a truly Marxist account of grounded morality, something which in turn must give a Marxist account of a shared human nature recognizing the injustice of the capitalist system, but they – at the time in which he was asking these questions – had failed to do so. Leading to the 'liberal critic' who accepts the autonomy of ethics, and the

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[113] Murphy, "Introduction," 4.
[114] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 45-68. See also Murphy, "Introduction," 5-6; MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, 125-27.
[115] Murphy, "Introduction," 5. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 68.
[116] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 66-68.
[117] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68.
[118] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68.
[119] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68.

divorce between morality and desire "but chooses morality," and the Stalinist who "accepts the divorce and chooses desire, renaming it morality."[120] In doing so, the Stalinist posits an ultimate and automatic justifying end for any power-seeking.[121] As noted, part of the critique which was missing from this 'humanist turn' in Marxism in the 50s and 60s for MacIntyre was not merely the underling liberal assumptions of their moral critiques, but also a lack of recognition that "*[b]oth* the autonomy of ethics *and* utilitarianism are aspects of the consciousness of capitalism; *both* are forms of alienation rather than moral guides," and so are inherently non-Marxist grounds for critique.[122]

Attempting to make his way out of this 'moral wilderness,' MacIntyre sought a 'middle way' connected "morally tightly enough to history, sociology, psychology, and other domains to preclude it from being a matter of mere preference … but not so tightly that *what ought to be* becomes simply *what is guaranteed to be*."[123] MacIntyre continued to struggle with these moral concerns of Marxism into the mid-1960s,[124] and despite moving away from Marx*ism* has remained influenced by Marx to the present day.[125]

In this period, it became more and more clear that MacIntyre has had at least one ear open to the happenings within the social sciences. This can be seen in both his initial teaching position as a professor of the philosophy of the social sciences at Manchester,[126] and through his various engagements with a range of psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists and other figures central to a range of social theory throughout the entirety of his career. Including, but not limited to,

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[120] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68.
[121] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68.
[122] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 68, emphasis added.
[123] Murphy, "Introduction," 6. Emphasis original.
[124] Paul Blackledge, "Utopias: Future, Present and Concrete in Alasdair MacIntyre and C. L. R. James," *International Critical Thought*, 9, no. 3, (2019): 430.
[125] See for example Alasdair MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), and MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*.
[126] This fact attained from Kelvin Knight during the *International Society of MacIntyrean Enquiry*'s Hegel-MacIntyre conference, Oct 7th-8th, 2022.

Marcuse,[127] Freud,[128] Marx,[129] Engels,[130] Goffman,[131] Gadamer,[132] Lenin,[133] Hobbes,[134] Hegel,[135] Mannheim,[136] Nietzsche,[137] Popper,[138] Rousseau,[139] Smith,[140] Rawls,[141] Nozick,[142] Anscombe,[143] Deleuze,[144] Durkheim,[145] Weber,[146] Derrida,[147] Lukacs,[148] Kierkegaard,[149] Machiavelli,[150] Spinoza,[151] Wittgenstein,[152] Descartes,[153] Kant,[154] Jung,[155] Malinowski,[156] Foucault,[157] Heidegger,[158]

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[127] *Marcuse*.
[128] *The Unconscious; After Virtue; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; Marcuse*.
[129] *Marxism & Christianity; After Virtue; Ethics and Politics; Dependant Rational Animals; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; A Short History of Ethics; Marcuse*.
[130] *Marxism & Christianit; After Virtue; The Unconscious; Against the Self-Images of the Age; Ethics and Politics; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; Marcuse*.
[131] *After Virtue*.
[132] *Dependant Rational Animals*.
[133] *Against the Self-Images of the Age; After Virtue*.
[134] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; The Unconscious; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Dependant Rational Animals; A Short History of Ethics*.
[135] *After Virtue; The Tasks of Philosophy; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Ethics and Politics; Dependant Rational Animals; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; A Short History of Ethics; Marcuse*.
[136] *After Virtue; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Ethics and Politics; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*.
[137] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy; Dependant Rational Animals; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; A Short History of Ethics*.
[138] *After Virtue; The Tasks of Philosophy*.
[139] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Ethics and Politics; A Short History of Ethics.*
[140] *After Virtue; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Ethics and Politics; A Short History of Ethics*.
[141] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?.*
[142] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?.*
[143] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; The Tasks of Philosophy*.
[144] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy*.
[145] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; A Short History of Ethics*.
[146] *After Virtue*.
[147] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy; Ethics and Politics*.
[148] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; The Tasks of Philosophy; Ethics and Politics*.
[149] *After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; The Tasks of Philosophy; A Short History of Ethics*.
[150] *After Virtue; Whose justice? Which Rationality?; The Tasks of Philosophy; A Short History of Ethics*.
[151] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.
[152] *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; The Unconscious; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy; Dependant Rational Animals; Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity; A Short History of Ethics; Marcuse*.
[153] *The Unconscious; The Tasks of Philosophy; Dependant Rational Animals*.
[154] *The Unconscious; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy; Ethics and Politics; Dependant Rational Animals; A Short History of Ethics*.
[155] *The Unconscious*.
[156] *The Unconscious*.
[157] *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; Dependant Rational Animals*.
[158] *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy; Dependant Rational Animals*.

Habermas,[159] Margaret Mead,[160] Kuhn,[161] Stein,[162] Wollstonecraft,[163] and of course, the classics from Socrates to Aquinas.

Through these engagements, MacIntyre realized that any ethics without a sociology attached to it is merely wishful thinking.[164] From this and other influences MacIntyre sought to ground morality in the 'is' of human desires,[165] without becoming subsumed into an emotivist position.[166] To do so MacIntyre argues we need a "concept of human nature, a concept which has to be the centre of any discussion of moral theory."[167] Despite having one foot in a range of social theory that tends to avoid accounts of 'human nature,' MacIntyre argues that such a concept is necessary to ground any moral reasoning in reality – to prevent precisely the problem he identified with the Marxism of this age, either an *over*-grounding *away from* morality, or a morality *ungrounded* in anything other than personal opinion. An elaboration on MacIntyre's engagement with Marx and his critiques of some elements of Marxist theory will be presented in Chapters 3 & 4, especially §4.4.(b).

While his engagements with questions of Marxism continued across a range of areas of focus,[168] MacIntyre also spent this period looking at questions of psychology,[169] the social

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[159] *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.
[160] *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.
[161] *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; The Tasks of Philosophy*.
[162] *The Tasks of Philosophy; Ethics and Politics*.
[163] *A Short History of Ethics*.
[164] Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Tradition and Disagreement," 388-89; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 23, 73, 117.
[165] MacIntyre has engaged with the is/ought problem stemming from Hume for a long time. See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 109-24; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Imperatives, Reasons for Action, and Morals," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 125-35; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Ought," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 136-56; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Some More About 'Ought'," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 157-90; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Antecedents of Action," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 191-210.
[166] Something well-demonstrated in his critiques of emotivism, discussed in §2.10.(b). See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 11-14, 16-35. This was later developed into a more refined critique of expressivism, see MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 20-26, 29-33, 41-42, 47-48, 57-59, 67-68, 138-41, 152-55.
[167] MacIntyre, in Murphy, "Introduction," 6.
[168] MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001b), 38-75.
[169] MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 27-37; MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*.

sciences,[170] history and its role in the tracing the development of ideas,[171] and the connection between questions of *morality* and questions of *action*.[172] From these various influences we can see the slow congealing of MacIntyre's work into a more articulate, unified project, one which sought to formulate an "ethics of human nature – where human nature is not merely a biological nature but also an historical and social nature – and … an historical *but not relativistic*, account of rationality in inquiry."[173] While the direction of MacIntyre's work in this period continued to become more clear, he had yet to clearly develop a means to achieve these goals. It was in the writing of *After Virtue*, and his work since, that he developed the conceptual tools to not only identify a telos for his academic work but provide a chance of moving towards it.

1.4.(b) The 'After Virtue Project:' 1977-1985

MacIntyre's writing of *After Virtue*, after his immigration to the United States in 1970,[174] doesn't represent a turn away from much of his previous work, so much as it represents a refocusing of it. While he was no longer an active Marxist at this point,[175] Marxist critiques still demand answering in his work (even if Marxist answers fail by MacIntyre's account). Likewise, the connection between action and morality, continue to be deployed as MacIntyre seeks to overcome the moral relativism and emotivism he identified in his earlier career.[176] While keeping an eye on the importance of the social, and the social sciences,[177] MacIntyre elaborated on the importance of the narrative wholeness of the self,[178] and the distinctly animalic aspects of human life[179] within a given social-historical context.[180]

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[170] MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 211-229, 260-79.
[171] MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*.
[172] MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 96-210.
[173] Murphy, "Introduction," 7, emphasis added.
[174] Blackledge and Davidson, "Introduction: The Unknown MacIntyre," xx; Murphy, "Introduction," 1; Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 278; Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 389.
[175] Having fully abandoned Marxism as a political project in 1963. See Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 388. This understanding however is contested by Blackledge, Davidson, Simpson, and others who argue for a continued Marxist influence in MacIntyre's work to the present day.
[176] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 6-61. See also §2.10.(b).
[177] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 79-108; Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 388-89.
[178] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 196-97; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-25; MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 95; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 153, 157-63, 211, 231-42, 309-15.
[179] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*.
[180] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 32-236.

It is in this period that many of the concepts which have been connected to MacIntyre by both his critics and supporters solidified. Traditions, narratives, practices, virtues, practical rationality, etc. It is also during this period that I would argue we see the most 'sociological' form of MacIntyre, insofar as his work takes on a particularistic, social and historically aware, account of how moral and epistemological concerns develop, change, and 'live' within this or that tradition. He balances these generalist positions with a strong focus on the role of the agentive individual through his theory of human action[181] and his account of virtue and their role in the seeking and living out of the good of human life.[182] It is here we can see the beginning of his Thomistic-Aristotelianism developing, although *After Virtue* represents a distinct attempt to rescue Aristotle from the dustbin of history and use him as a critique of the contemporary liberal moral wasteland.[183] While Aquinas was mentioned,[184] as were many other philosophers, he was not a core element of MacIntyre's project at this point.

Despite this, it is in this period that MacIntyre develops the tools to make sense of a reapplication of Thomist principles in a contemporary age through his concepts such as traditions, practices, and practical rationality. This not only allows him to take the next step in his career, but it also helps to answer some of the uncertainties present in his earlier work. The development of what could be considered a socio-philosophic methodology of contextualizing questions of morality and epistemology,[185] allowed for more articulate attempts at answering these questions. While the question of the human good existed in MacIntyre's thought since his Marxist days,[186] it was only now that he had the tools to delimit between *different kinds* of goods, in *particular contexts*, and *how they might be achieved*, away from the limitations he identified within the contemporary Marxist movements of his youth.[187]

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[181] See Chapter 2, §2.4.
[182] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-25. In so doing representing a synthetic 'middle-ground' position between the polarized 'agency/structure' debate which has raged within the social sciences since their inception.
[183] Something identified much earlier in his career. See MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 45-68 and MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv.
[184] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 10, 53, 96, 142, 165, 171, 177-80, 185, 200.
[185] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas."
[186] This was in part due to his having an eye to both Marxist and Christian traditions, tracing moral similarities between the two. See, MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, v-xxxi; Blackledge and Davidson, "Introduction," xxi.
[187] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, 42-43, 61; MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken," in *The MacIntyre Reader* Kelvin Knight (ed.), (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 232.

1.4.(c) The 'Thomistic-Aristotelian Period:' 1985-Present

It was out of this 'After Virtue project' that MacIntyre's mature Thomistic-Aristotelian position crystalized. From 1985 onwards MacIntyre recognized that his "philosophical convictions had become those of a Thomistic-Aristotelian, something which had initially surprised [him]."[188] Like his move from an explicitly Marxist position to an Aristotelian one in the development of the '*After Virtue* project,' this development represents a further evolution in MacIntyre's thought, rather than a radical break from previous aspects, as the central elements of concern for MacIntyre remain in this mature position: a functional account of the role of traditions in epistemic, ethical, and historical aspects of the social world; a balanced attention for both the individual and the social; an account of human action; a critical position of the liberal-capitalist state of the global political and economic sphere; and an account of human flourishing and goods which allow for positive developments beyond any merely negative critique.[189] Further to this we can see the concern with the question of human nature, present since his early Marxist days,[190] find new means of elaboration in the works of Aquinas and the questions of natural law,[191] human rationality,[192] and its centrality of questioning to human nature.[193]

While MacIntyre has been critical of liberalism since long before the writing of *After Virtue*,[194] the further MacIntyre moved into his mature theoretical position the more his critiques of liberalism are viewed as either conservative, communitarian, overly nostalgic - or all combined.

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[188] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Preface," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007),vii.

[189] Indeed, some have noted that MacIntyre himself is too radical in the way he frames this shift 'away' from past positions, resulting in an easy misunderstanding of the continuity still present in MacIntyre's contemporary work. My thanks to Joe Simpson for raising this point in conversation during our 'Marx & MacIntyre' reading group, June 3rd, 2024. This can also be seen in MacIntyre's review of his own past work and its continued importance, see for instance MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, v-xxxi.

[190] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 63, 68.

[191] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 88-89, MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification," 52-53, 60-61, 69.

[192] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 225-26; MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*.

[193] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Ends of Life, the Ends of Philosophical Writing," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 130-31, 140; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of Fides et Ratio," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 184, 192-93, 213; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 64, 69, 71.

[194] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 46-68; Kelvin Knight, "Introduction," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, 25-26; MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 157-66; MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, xxi-xxiii, 124-42.

Such critiques – which will be addressed variously in Chapter 2, §2.1, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.10 – do not successfully identify MacIntyre as developing from a 'radical young academic' into a stereotypical 'conservative tenured professor;'[195] rather, they represent a failure in the reading of MacIntyre.[196] Likewise, MacIntyre's anticapitalism, born of his Marxist origins, continues throughout his mature position,[197] and can be seen in his Thomistic justifications for anticapitalist positioning.[198] Despite the (attempted) application of his theories of virtue, practices, institutions, etc., within the field of management studies,[199] MacIntyre has constantly rejected such uses. When asked why he declined invitation to address a conference on business ethics once, he reputedly replied that "it was for the same reason that he wouldn't attend a conference on astrology."[200]

1.5 Layout of Sections & Chapters

Having provided a brief overview of his historical development of thought, I will now proceed to give a very brief overview of the remaining chapters to sketch out the structure of my dialogue. While human communication – and thus dialogues – always begin *in situ*, and this could perhaps be used as justification for simply jumping into a confusing mess of back-and-forth referencing, I instead am aiming to – in the vein of MacIntyre – provide a historical and epistemological framework of reference for such dialogue. In this manner, I will seek in the coming chapters to appropriately preface any engagement between interlocutors – be they MacIntyre and Marx, Hegel and Marx, Nietzsche and Weber, or indeed MacIntyre and sociology – so as to provide the reader with the appropriate background to find such dialogues fruitful and substantial.

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[195] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 166. A phenomenon MacIntyre has explicitly critiqued: "as the student generations pass on they will become all the more frustrated and disillusioned for having been so hopeful in the past. And this is what the reactionaries hope for. 'I was a socialist when I was young, too.' The unspoken completion of this – 'How good to grow middle-aged, conservative and self-satisfied like me' – points to the danger: the stilting up of the poetry of adolescence into the prose of bourgeois middle age. All the pressures are there: the need to get a job, to succeed in it, to bring up a family, to pay for a house. Not to succumb to these the feeling and the questioning must find a theory and a way of life which will transmute the poetry of adolescence into a continuous life-long activity."

[196] Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Social Practices, Marxism and Ethical Anti-Capitalism," *Political Studies*, 57, (2009), 867.

[197] Daniel P. Rhodes and M. Therese Lysaught, "Whose Revolution? Which Future? The Legacy for a Radical Pedagogy in Virtue," *Expositions*, 14, no.1, (2020): 97.

[198] See for instance MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 41-63; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 93-100.

[199] Kelvin Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 283-84.

[200] Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 284.

In this vein, the remainder of the dissertation will be broken into *major headings* (Sections and Chapters), and *minor headings* (Subsections and Subsubsections), the specifics of which will be briefly introduced at the beginning of each Section and elaborated throughout the Chapters in question. These will proceed as follows. Having completed Section 1/Chapter 1, we will now move to Section 2/Chapter 2 wherein we will engage broadly and deeply with some of MacIntyre's core theoretical contributions to philosophy – and indeed social theory – over his lifetime. This chapter will be broken down into subsections focused on related areas of MacIntyrean theory relevant to our overall discussion which will be delineated and explicated. As this range of theory will provide the essential bedrock of our further discussion, this will necessarily be the largest Chapter. Proceeding from this Chapter the reader should have an appropriately broad and deep account of MacIntyre's work to see its deployment in later Chapters come more naturally and be able to trace a range of shared influenced within our interlocutors.

Section 3 will trace the Hegelian influences in Marx to MacIntyre. Chapter 3 will focus on Hegel and his major contributions to theoretical debates in the last two centuries. Chapter 4 will show how Marx reacted to, rejected, and adapted to elements of Hegel in his development of a range of theoretical frameworks which have remained influential – especially within sociology – to this day. We also see an elaboration of MacIntyre's development from an avowed Marxist to his contemporary position. A development which, despite his rejection of Marxism as a political project, still fits within a dialogical relation to Marx, with MacIntyre's work remaining Marxian, bearing the influence of both the successes and failures of Marxist theory present to this day. What this means for the application of MacIntyre to sociology will also briefly be discussed.

Section 4 will look at the Nietzschean influence in Weber, and the role that plays on some of the deployments of, and critiques of, Weber by MacIntyre. Chapter 5 will demonstrate how sociology in many ways represents a response to the failure of idealistic Enlightenment rationality – perhaps best represented in the works of Nietzsche. From this we will see how Weber took up many of Nietzsche's critiques of society – and indeed, of humanity – as givens in the manner in which he proceeded in analyzing and theorizing about society and the nihilistic conclusions this largely resulted in. Chapter 6 will look at how Weber and MacIntyre share many interests, but how while remaining influenced by many of Weber's valuable critiques, MacIntyre's rejection of much of Nietzsche helps shield him from the nihilistic and isolationist conclusions of Weber in his

moving forward. This is demonstrated through a focused comparison between MacIntyre's conception of practices and crafts, Weber's idea of vocations, and the position each takes towards the question of pedagogy.

Section 5 will conclude our work with a focused engagement with Bourdieu. Chapter 7 will start to raise the question of what a 'MacIntyrean sociology' might look like, and critically engage the contemporary phenomenon of 'public sociology,' taking Bourdieu as a heuristic case-study of the phenomenon. After laying out some of the theoretical developments of Bourdieu and the role they play in supposedly grounding his move towards public sociology, we will look to several MacIntyrean critiques of both the concept of public sociology and some of the Bourdieusian theoretical core concepts. Proceeding in a dialogical fashion, the baby will not be thrown out with the bathwater, as it is accepted that the role played by these concepts is essential to any functional sociological approach. Likewise, while the execution of the quest for public sociology is problematic in several ways, it touches on a major underlying issue within contemporary society – the division between 'the academic' and 'the rest.' Proceeding to dig into how MacIntyre might offer tools for overcoming some of these shortfalls, as well as this central problem of expertise and its relation to the 'plain persons' of society, we will sketch out what a more MacIntyrean sociology might look like to accomplish this. Chapter 8 will conclude the work, summarizing the arguments about what MacIntyre might offer sociology, what sociology might offer MacIntyre, as well as addressing several potential challenges to a more MacIntyrean approach to sociology.

To achieve any of this, we will have to sufficiently equip the reader with the tools necessary to proceed on such a quest towards the goal of a more MacIntyrean sociology. As such, we will now turn to Chapter 2 to develop a series of core reference points for the proceeding dialogues.[201] As noted above, this Chapter will be different from the rest in terms of size, and given the deep exegetical engagement with each of the concepts presented, the reader is advised to treat each of the subsections of this Chapter as if they were in effect their own chapter.

[201] Reference will be made throughout this work to other sections of this work for the sake non-duplication and ease of reference for the reader as much as possible, as has already been demonstrated in this Chapter by reference to various subsections of Chapters 2, 3, 4, & 5.

SECTION 2: STARTING THE QUEST

Chapter 2: Core MacIntyrean Theories

Having presented an account of the dialogical project I wish to undertake and given a brief historical account of the development of the primary interlocutor, it is now imperative to provide a deep dive into critical elements of his theoretical and metatheoretical frameworks. As such, in this Chapter we will examine in depth Macintyre's thought as it relates to the question of *traditions* and *epistemological crises* (§2.1); *practices*, *crafts*, and *institutions* (§2.2); *virtue ethics* and *human desire* (§2.3); *human action* and the question of *being* and *becoming* (§2.4); *practical philosophy* and the question of the relation of academia more broadly to the '*plain persons*' who make up most of society (§2.5); the question of *human nature* and its relation to *human vulnerability and flourishing* (§2.6); the necessarily *narrative structure of human selfhood* (§2.7); MacIntyre's response to the ideas of lifeworld or habitus in the form of *prereflective backgrounds* (§2.8); MacIntyre's *moral psychology* (§2.9); and a range of *critical elements* deriving from – and integral to – these aspects of MacIntyre's thought (§2.10).

As this will be the longest Chapter in the work, it might be asked why it was not broken down into two Chapters, perhaps one on the individual-centric theoretical developments in MacIntyre's thought and one on the social-centric theoretical developments. Representing the work of anyone who rejects the false binary of individual vs. society[1] – in a manner not dissimilar to George Herbert Mead – will always be difficult, as one will appear stuck in a hermeneutic circle. Any attempt to forcibly divorce the necessarily intertwined elements of the human individual and the human society will be produce a range of heuristic problems. While it may appear messier, I argue that the cutting of this Gordian knot requires a *ongoing* dialogical engagement between whole and part – and between *different parts* – throughout each subsection, covering a range of vectors, whether they be human, social, or otherwise, as each social phenomenon is for MacIntyre composed of humans whose agency allows for the potential to modify them, and each individual human is necessarily moulded by and directed towards a range of goods and excellences which are only intelligible or obtainable within social-historical contexts. Proceeding in an Aristotelian

[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.), Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 128-33.

manner, all of these discussions and debates take place in an already existing social-historical context,[2] and so it makes sense to begin with MacIntyre's accounts of *traditions* as a metathoretical framework within which to embed all of the following discussions.

2.1 Traditions and Crises: Moral, Intellectual, Social, and Historical

When reviewing some of his earlier work in the most recent publication of *Marxism & Christianity*, MacIntyre recognized that in the 1960s, he had realized the central importance of asking

> how is it possible to identify in the case of other and rival theses and arguments a variety of distortions and limitations deriving from their authors' historical and social contexts, while at the same time being able to exhibit one's own theses and arguments, including one's theses and arguments about their theses and arguments, as exempt from such distortion and limitation?[3]

This of course was a central problem which precipitated in developments of social theory – structuralist, poststructuralist, and beyond – which grappled with such questions of social-historical relativism and questions of capital 'T' truth. MacIntyre's eventual response to this query was the development of a conception of *tradition* which allowed for both a recognition of social-historical relativity, while still allowing for truth within – and beyond – one's social-historical circumstances.

Historically, the term tradition has been understood in a variety of ways. It invokes several intuitive meanings: the idea of inheritance, of retrospective time-orientation, of cultural meaning, and often of conservative social and political stances. MacIntyre's use of the term deploys several of these elements, especially those regarding historical and cultural continuity, while challenging and rejecting others, especially those regarding non-progressive and conservative accounts. For MacIntyre, all epistemological or ethical considerations are bound within history. History is an inherently dialectical process[4] which acts as both the background to our epistemological and ethical concerns, and the substance of everyday life. This concern for history[5] is one partially inherited

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[2] Aristotle, "Book 1," in *Aristotle's Politics*, (trans.) Carnes Lord, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1253a. Humans are both "political animal[s]" which must recognize the pre-existence of a community to ourselves both historically and, for Aristotle, logically, as "the whole must of necessity be prior to the part." (4).
[3] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xix.
[4] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 139.
[5] Especially present in his account of tradition, dramatic narratives, and epistemological crises. See MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises and Dramatic Narrative," 19-23; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 349-69; Graham, "MacIntyre on History and Philosophy," 10-37.

from Hegel[6] and Marx,[7] which has woven into MacIntyre's interconnected theories of practices, narrative selfhood, and traditions.[8] It is through this intertwining of ideas that MacIntyre binds human knowledge and action in the present, with human knowledge and actions in the past and future. Here too we can see the influence of Gadamer through an Aristotelian lens.[9]

Kelvin Knight has proposed that MacIntyre's account of traditions is best conceived of as a *metatheoretical framework,* which has allowed him to resist both the charges of relativism and arbitrariness.[10] He argues that

> MacIntyre is well aware that his metatheory cannot comprise a solution to the problem of competing paradigms any more than, say, Kuhn's metatheory of scientific revolutions can resolve any disputes in natural science. All that MacIntyre's second-order theory can establish is that what may be called the problem of relativism or of perspectivism is in principle soluble, a claim already implicit in his first-order theor[ies]. Only a substantive theory might, according to MacIntyre's metatheory of traditions, solve the problem by demonstrating its superiority over its rivals.[11]

In doing so, Knight recognizes how MacIntyre's (meta)theory of traditions necessarily frames all of his first-order substantive theories, whether descriptive or normative. Likewise, it makes sense for us to begin this chapter with an account of MacIntyre's theory of traditions to help frame his substantive theories which follow.

MacIntyre's use of the concept 'tradition' has been flexible in many ways across his career, as he has variously used 'traditions' to account for moral, epistemic, and social histories. The histories of social groups, bound together across time with shared concern for moral and epistemic

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[6] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls, 81-85; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7-17. See elaboration on the connections between Hegel's account of history and MacIntyre in Chapter 3, §3.2.(b).
[7] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 151. An appreciation of history with an eye to Marx's 'practical consciousness,' focused on "the concepts of intention, deliberation and desire, those concepts which are essential to understanding men as agents and not a mere passive reflexes of non-human forces." See also, MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 223-33, and MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 45-74, for more on the import of the historical to Marx from MacIntyre's perspective. The influences of Marx on MacIntyre will broadly be discussed in Chapter 4.
[8] Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 394-97.
[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," in *The MacIntyre Reader,* (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 265, "I am very close to all in Gadamer that comes from Aristotle; that which comes from Heidegger I reject"
[10] Kelvin Knight, "Introduction," in *The MacIntyre Reader,* (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 16.
[11] Knight, "Introduction," 16.

philosophies,[12] scientific ideas,[13] practices,[14] or political movements, allows for the development, dissolution, and reinvigoration of traditions. While MacIntyre does not have a single static definition of 'tradition,'[15] there are several themes which recur throughout his use and development of the concept. The role history plays in questions of epistemology, sociology, and ethics is the primary theme.[16] One cannot have developed an account of ontology, epistemology, or ethics without a history to contextualize the point of reference. Likewise, one cannot develop any account of human nature, or human action, without history.

Despite this, history – and the traditions which make it up – are not static for MacIntyre. His teleological understanding of history is one which allows for potential progress – which someone can aim and move towards throughout history. This is not, however, a 'liberal,' 'end of history' account of progress for MacIntyre.[17] *Progress*, for MacIntyre, is *not* a directionality towards an 'end of history' – whether Marxist, Hegelian, or some Nietzschean-Liberal conglomeration.[18] Rather, progress for MacIntyre represents *the movement of individuals and traditions towards various teloi across history*,[19] a movement which is directional, but which is not deterministic, where the reaching of a given telos provides the realization of further teloi to aim towards,[20] allowing for a teleological account which is progressive, expansive, and flexible.

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[12] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," In *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 261, "philosophical inquiry, in ethics as elsewhere, is defective insofar as it is not historical."

[13] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as the Ideology of Bureaucratic Authority," In *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 67-68, social traditions as necessary background for understanding ideology and science.

[14] Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 394. "A tradition is a shared conversation through time about the rules, ends, direction, and overall health of a practice. If practices are shared forms of activity, traditions are shared conversations about such activities."

[15] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 73-79.

[16] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 261, "philosophical inquiry, in ethics as elsewhere, is defective insofar as it is not historical."

[17] Terry Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity," 181. MacIntyre's critique of liberalism is not a critique of some of the political progresses which it has achieved, but rather of the structural failures and underlying problems which it covers up. See further discussion of the questions of history and progress in Chapters 3 and 4. For elaboration on MacIntyre's critique of liberalism, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 326-48; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv, 117-43; and Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 59-68.

[18] In this last case, see Fukuyama's account. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006). For brief elaboration, see Chapter 5, §5.1.(c), fn. 42 and Chapter 6, §6.2.(b), fn. 139.

[19] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 269-70. MacIntyre notes the importance of three different aspects of the concept of tradition: it's embodiment in social practices; it's shared ability to ask and answer questions within a historical and social context; and how it binds rationality to history (preventing some ahistorical understanding of 'the rational').

[20] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315.

Without each of these elements, one could not have progress. Individuals are required as agents, as beings of human action to make the move; traditions are necessary as the social, epistemic, and ethical backgrounds which help focus the goals of the individuals and provide them with the tools to take the next step, and the step after that; and teloi are necessary to aim towards in these steps. So, even though *traditions* are an object of focus for MacIntyre, they are inherently anticonservative in their necessary role in his account of progress.[21] Indeed, they are potentially revolutionary.[22]

As noted above, traditions for MacIntyre cover a range of overlapping phenomena – all embedded within history. Traditions are necessarily social,[23] as they are made up of practices,[24] crafts,[25] and individuals relating to one another in social spaces. Traditions also represent intellectual spaces of maintenance and development for epistemological, ontological, and ethical concerns. Rarely is it the case where these concerns are separated from one another. One of the case-studies which MacIntyre returns to often in this explanation is the tradition of Thomism[26] – itself representing a dialectical union between Augustinianism and Aristotelianism. And so while some traditions may be broader than others (Thomism, for instance, represents an epistemic, ontological, religious, moral, social, and academic tradition embedded across a range of history, while positivism might represent an ontological, epistemic, and academic tradition embedded across a different range of history), all traditions are *necessarily social* insofar as they are composed of individuals interacting, and *historical* insofar as they exist in, and across, history. Lastly, all traditions – according to MacIntyre – progress insofar as they identify and move towards their various teloi.

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[21] Mark C. Murphy, "Introduction," 2-3; Rhodes and Lysaught, "Whose Revolution? Which Future?" 97.
[22] For the revolutionary influence of Aristotle, see Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary: Ethics, Resistance, and Utopia," and Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," in *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (ed.) Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). For the influence of Marx, see Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson (eds.), *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*.
[23] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 67-68.
[24] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187-94; Jean Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40-41.
[25] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Version of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 127-28.
[26] Elaborated in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and elsewhere.

While the specifics of what kind of tradition one is discussing may differ – and do differ throughout MacIntyre's career and engagement with the concept – there are several themes which MacIntyre develops as necessary for understanding how the concept grows, clashes, and dies across history. All traditions begin as historically contingent for MacIntyre but grow through both intra- and inter-traditional dialogue and conflict.[27] Traditions are often born of historically and socially contingent texts, which represent the starting place for ongoing questions based on those texts. Once inadequacies are identified within these texts, challenges are put forth and attempts to resolve these inadequacies undertaken.[28] Should these not be easily resolved through intra-traditional dialogue, an epistemological crisis can develop, whereby the epistemological (or ontological, or ethical) tools at hand are insufficient to overcome the issue.[29] It is at this point that engagement with alien traditions is often necessitated.

MacIntyre notes that as traditions develop, they must become "to a greater or lesser degree a form of enquiry and will have had to institutionalize and regulate to some extent at least its methods of enquiry."[30] It is through these processes that traditions of enquiry and the communities within which they exist will intertwine, which will in turn allow for the recognition of similar questions, and means of questioning, between different traditions and communities which are the bearers of those traditions.[31] While "incoherence within established belief will always provide a reason for enquiring further," it will not provide "in itself a conclusive reason for rejecting established belief, until something more adequate because less incoherent has been discovered."[32] And it is here that traditions, whether in states of epistemological crises or not, can come to *purposefully* engage with alien traditions, seeking to resolve the rational incoherences internal to their epistemological, ethical, or ontological systems. It can also be the case that an otherwise internally coherent tradition can come into contact with an alien tradition accidentally, which poses

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[27] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," In *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998): 251. MacIntyre also elaborates on the particularism of traditional origins while highlighting the need to draw on alien/rival traditions to grow, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354-69.
[28] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 355.
[29] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 361; MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 3-6.
[30] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 358.
[31] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 358-59.
[32] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 359.

questions that, without any malicious intent, can cause epistemological crises. Evidence of this is replete throughout history.[33]

Should this occur – should traditions begin to fail to make progress by their own standards of progress; should rival positions no longer be capable of being settled rationally; should attempts at dialogue seemingly only disclose further inadequacies and incoherencies within the tradition – then the resolution to an epistemological crisis cannot be obtained by means of the existing standards:

> The solution to a genuine epistemological crisis requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new type or types of theory which meet three highly exacting requirements. First, this in some ways radically new and conceptually enriching scheme … must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way. Second, it must also provide an explanation of just what it was which rendered the tradition, before it had acquired these new resources, sterile or incoherent or both. And third, the first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to this point.[34]

To achieve this is to be able to rewrite history in a more insightful way, and because of this it is often the case that "an epistemological crises may only be recognized for what it was in retrospect."[35] All of this is difficult to achieve if a tradition has become sterile or incoherent, and

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[33] See for example the contact between Mayan and Catholic European cultures (and worldviews) in John D. Early, Maya and Catholic Cultures in Crisis, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2012); or, for the interaction between Jesuit priests and the Japanese, where the question of translation central to MacIntyre's account is very evident, see Urs App, "St. Francis Xavier's Discovery of Japanese Buddhism: A Chapter in the European Discovery of Buddhism (Part 1: Before the Arrival in Japan, 1547-1549)," *The Eastern Buddhist*, 30, no. 1, (1997): 53-78. One could also look at the cultural interactions and challenges which presented themselves both ways during the Mongol invasions of Eastern Europe in the Thirteenth Century. See Colleen Ho, "Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century European-Mongol Relations," *History Compass*, 10, no. 12, (2012): 946-68; Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Feder N. Veselov, "Omens of the Apocalypse: The First Rus' Encounter with the Mongols Through the Prism of the Medieval Mind," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Mongols and Central-Eastern Europe: Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations*, (ed.) Alexander V. Maiorov and Roman Hautala, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 15-35; Feder N. Veselov, "From Monstrous Creatures to Neighbouring Humans: Image of the Mongols in the European Book Miniatures of the Thirteenth-Sixteen Centuries," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Mongols and Central-Eastern Europe: Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations*, (ed.) Alexander V. Maiorov and Roman Hautala, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 465-86; Reman Hautala, "Islamization of the Golden Horde during the Özbeg Khan's Rule According to Muslim, Latin, and Rus' Sources," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Mongols and Central-Eastern Europe: Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations*, (ed.) Alexander V. Maiorov and Roman Hautala, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 501-12.

[34] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 362.

[35] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 363.

it is for this reason that dialogue with alien traditions is often necessary to motivate the theoretical innovation to overcome epistemological crises. MacIntyre gives the useful example of traditions representing theoretical 'languages' which individuals have and speak. One can learn a second language, but it will rarely be known with greater depth and naturality than one's first language. However, if someone is raised with *two first languages* (or, raised in the communities and epistemic histories of two traditions), then their capacity to translate between the ideas of one and the other will be at a much higher level than someone who is learning this or that tradition for the first time, leading to the introduction of his deployment of the concept of *translatability*, or the possible communicability between different traditions of thought.[36]

Having learned the 'language' of an alien tradition – whether seeking answers to failings of their own tradition or not – one may

> find themselves compelled to recognize that within this other tradition it is possible to construct from the concepts and theories peculiar to it what they were unable to provide from their own conceptual and theoretical resources, a cogent and illuminating explanation – cogent and illuminating, that is, by their own standards – of why their own intellectual traditions had been unable to solve its problems or restore its coherence.[37]

Such illumination resolves the first two of the requirements MacIntyre lays out for overcoming an epistemological crisis, but it fails to resolve the third "[d]erived as it is from a genuinely alien tradition."[38] As such it does not maintain the necessary continuity with the preceding history of the tradition. Should this occur, inhabitants of the tradition in crisis must recognize that the alien tradition "is superior in rationality and in respect to its claims to truth."[39] Such acknowledgement does not always come, and this tradition and its inhabitants may exist in *states of denial* for long periods of time in relation to the superiority of this or that alien tradition. Examples of religious or intellectual hubris preventing dialogue or recognition of superior rationality of the other fill the annals of history (indeed, MacIntyre's bailiwick – Aquinas – is a perfect example of overcoming years of such hubris in relation to the Islamic study of Aristotle and other Greeks). Should this

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[36] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 364, 370-88; MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 256; Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 3-6; Reiss Kruger, "Recognizing Human Rights: An Argument for the Application of Recognition Theory within the Sociology of Human Rights," *Human Rights Review*, 22, (2021): 514-16; see also Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 394-404, for traditions as communicative dialogues.
[37] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 364.
[38] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 365.
[39] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 365.

denial prevent the overcoming of an epistemological crisis for long enough, the tradition can be defeated by its own standards and cease to function as living tradition.[40]

All of these descriptions – success, failure, stagnation, incoherence, progress, etc. – help cement MacIntyre's *teleological account* of traditions. It is through the rational structures of traditions that humans can aim towards improvements of all kinds, and move towards those ends across history. In so doing we work diligently to understand our own traditions even as we seek to transcend them, always renewing – and potentially improving – our perspective of whatever end we seek.[41] It is in part because of this openness to progress that MacIntyre rejects the conversative positions often wrongly associated with him. Indeed, "a premature regimentation of one's thought in the interest of total consistency may well lead to the rejection of important truths."[42] One within any tradition – if one is personally to remain open to, and keep one's tradition open to, progress – must remain aware of the limitations of one's knowledge.[43] Likewise, the narrative quest of one's life[44] requires one to *also* realize that the end(s) one aims towards are always possible to progress beyond – that there is no final achievable end one can reach and claim to have 'finished' or 'accomplished' life.[45]

It is through such teleological possibility for progress, and accounts of how traditions develop and come to crisis, that history moves. Indeed, rational justification only improves through growth in traditions of thought, for MacIntyre.[46] A *living tradition* is, then, an "historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes many generations."[47] Traditions, MacIntyre argues, when vital and alive, "embody continuities of conflict. Indeed when a tradition becomes Burkean, it is always dying or dead."[48] What MacIntyre is referring to here by referencing Burke requires a minor excursus.

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[40] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 365.
[41] Christopher Stephen Lutz, "From Voluntarist Nominaism to Rationalism to Chaos: Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Modern Ethics," *Analyse & Kritik,* 30 (2008): 99.
[42] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 257.
[43] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 269-70, 273, 276-77.
[44] See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-15, for discussion of 'narrative quests.'
[45] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315. See also the discussion in §2.6.
[46] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 262.
[47] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.
[48] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222. This once more proving MacIntyre's anticonservative account of traditions.

The problematic account of traditions taken up by Edmund Burke, which has influenced the typical contemporary association between the question of 'tradition' and conservative political stances.[49] MacIntyre notes elsewhere that theorists such as Burke and Newman – who were explicitly concerned with the question of traditions – had already "been alienated from those traditions about which they theorize."[50] While this damaged in MacIntyre's eyes their meta-level capacity for analyses of traditions, it demonstrated in the living out of their lives some of the points which MacIntyre himself recognizes as central to his account of traditions.

Burke presented an account of traditions which provided "simultaneously a defense of the established order … as well as an attack upon any appeal to theoretically grounded principles purporting to have an authority independent of that conferred from within."[51] It was in this sense, entirely *internalist.* Interestingly, the theoretical account put forward by Burke seems to fit closely to the 'relativist challenge' MacIntyre describes, which asserts that "to conclude this rather than that can be rational relative to the standards of some particular tradition, but not rational as such," *as well as* the 'perspectivist challenge,' which "puts in question the possibility of making truth-claims from within any one tradition," and in so doing "withdraw[s] the ascription of truth and falsity" entirely.[52] This process is very much in keeping with the derationalization of traditions which Burke's account demands, and which MacIntyre is critical of. MacIntyre's account of traditions in good order presents them as "historically extended, socially embodied argument[s]" focused largely on "the goods which constitute that tradition."[53] Traditions, for MacIntyre, are essentially *historically continuous, rational* social phenomena. Burke, on the other hand, saw traditions in good order as spaces for the *automatic reproduction of that order*, so that "no place is left for reflection, [or of] rational theorizing as a work of and within tradition."[54] So when a tradition becomes 'Burkean,' it is always dying because it is *ceasing to recognize itself as not only rationally structured, but a space for rational reflection and re-evaluation.*

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[49] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222. Conservative positions which MacIntyre notes are mostly engaged in the "conserving [of] only older rather than later versions of liberal individualism. Their own core doctrine is as liberal and as individualist as that of self-avowed liberals."
[50] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 8.
[51] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 217.
[52] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 352.
[53] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.
[54] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 353.

Despite this, MacIntyre does recognize the value Burke provides through the external observation of his life history, if not his theoretical accounts, through three main observations. The first is

> the way in which Burke had first to make himself into a member of the English established order to be able to speak from within it. It was not open to him to commend that order from without as an Irishman; he had to transform himself into an owner of English property, to imagine or reimagine himself as an English gentleman.[55]

Secondly, looking at Burke's work we can see that he draws our attention to the fact that any stable and continuous social order will necessarily have to maintain a level of adaptability. These adaptations will be not only on the *political* or *economic* level – through the "repressing of this group, repelling of that, coopting this other"[56] – but on the level of *principle*, as "no principle will have been exempt from periodic reevaluation and revision in the light of its success or failure," indeed, traditions represent a "history of the adaptation of principle to circumstance."[57] Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Burke demonstrated that it was *precisely because of his externality* to the English social system that he was able to provide the account he did, as he

> had the advantage of first viewing it from without, the kind of view of the relationships of the parts of a social system to the whole which is often denied to those who inhabit that system. For they after all are themselves among the parts of that system, encountering other parts piecemeal in the encounters of everyday life, but characteristically being denied the opportunity of viewing the whole as a whole.[58]

This demonstration made by Burke's *life*, if not his explicit work, plays a central role in MacIntyre's focus on the importance of the translatability between traditions,[59] demonstrated archetypally elsewhere in MacIntyre's engagement with Aquinas, who was only able to forge the accounts he did because he was operating from the position of someone 'speaking the two first languages' of Aristotelianism and Medieval Catholicism, for instance.[60]

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[55] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 217.
[56] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 217.
[57] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 218.
[58] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 218.
[59] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 364, 370-88.
[60] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 164-208, 364.

While traditions are sustained, destroyed, or as above noted, re-evaluated and revised, by many historical happenings and epistemological crises, it is in large part the "exercise or lack of exercise of the relevant virtues" which sustain or fail to sustain the relationships necessary for the practices and intellectual quests which make up a tradition.[61]

2.2 Practices, Crafts, and Institutions

Before any discussion of the virtues can be had, the social spaces wherein virtues are developed and maintained must be explained, and these, for MacIntyre, are practices, crafts, and institutions. These are all social phenomena, which make them historical and things which are both partially composed of human belief and partially composed of human action. MacIntyre puts this well when he notes:

> If widespread brain lesions resulted in the loss of all our beliefs about atoms and molecules so that not a trace of such concepts remained in our thought or our language or was embodied in our practice, there would still be atoms and molecules … If similar lesions resulted in the loss of all our beliefs about representative government … there would be no such thing as representative government any longer. Beliefs about the concepts of physical realities are always secondary to those realities; the physical world does not require us to have any particular beliefs about it or concepts of it, for it to exist. But with social reality it is quite otherwise.[62]

His realism, combined with his form of social constructivism, allows space for both those things human belief has no power over, and those things it does.

MacIntyre notes in this regard that "[s]ocial practices, institutions and organizations are partially constituted by the beliefs and concepts of those who participate in, have transactions with and attitudes towards them."[63] He says 'partially' because it is "the belief-informed and concept-informed *activities* that *are* practices, institutions or organizations, and activities have other important relevant characteristics. But mere behavior by itself, abstracted from beliefs and concepts, is meaningless."[64] Thus 'the social' cannot merely be an *idea* about what the social is.

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[61] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 223.
[62] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 57.
[63] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 57.
[64] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 57, emphasis original.

Here we see one of the Marxian influences on MacIntyre's account of human action.[65] He goes on to point out that the beliefs about a relationship between different persons/positions – say, between a doctor and a patient – may be different on different sides, and that such relationships may "embody *an argument* about sickness, health, expertise, drugs and many other topics. Each attempts to win this argument in part by casting the other into a role which fits the dramatic forms suited to their own side of the argument."[66] And so, much like traditions, practices and other social phenomena *represent arguments about what they are*. The beliefs about them only have power if the *activity* of argument and interaction follows through to cement them in space and time.

Practices, crafts, and institutions, however, all differ in various ways by MacIntyre's description, and so it is important to define them as clearly as possible. *Practices* are a new development in relation to MacIntyre's Aristotelianism wherein MacIntyre does not "attempt to equate it with either traditional '*energeiai'* or '*praxeis'*. To call practices human *energeiai* would be to imply that each is universally predicable of any fully formed human being, whereas MacIntyre's practices are far more contingent and particularistic than this,"[67] something evidenced especially with the anti-ableist themes in *Dependent Rational Animals*. His most clear definition of practices comes from *After Virtue,* where he describes them as:

> [A]ny coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence [virtues] which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence [virtue], and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[68]

MacIntyre goes on to list examples of things which are, and are not, practices: "[t]ic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess. Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is."[69] So are various sciences and academic pursuits, as well as arts such as painting and music. It is clear here that practices must be more socially complex than singular activities and

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[65] Blackledge "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism," 225-26, it was a young MacIntyre's engagement with the New British Left of the 1950s that lead him to try and articulate a "sophisticated Marxist justification for the ethical significance of working class practice" (225).
[66] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 58, emphasis original.
[67] Kelvin Knight, "After Tradition: Heidegger *or* MacIntyre, Aristotle *and* Marx," 40, emphasis original.
[68] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.
[69] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.

must have internal to them virtues and goods. One cannot be a 'virtuous planter of turnips,' but one can develop virtues in the practice of gardening which lead to better achievement of the goods internal to gardening (including, but not limited to, the planting of turnips).

This distinction between internal and external goods is one which MacIntyre highlights using the example of the game of chess, where an adult is motivating a child to play and attempt to win by rewarding them with candy should they do so:

> On the one hand there are those goods externally and contingently attached to chess-playing and to other practices by the accidents of social circumstance – in the case of the imaginary child candy, in the case of real adults such goods as prestige, status and money. There are always alternative ways for achieving such goods, and their achievement is never to be had *only* by engaging in some particular kind of practice. On the other hand there are goods internal to the practice of chess which cannot be had in any way but by playing chess or some other game of that specific kind.[70]

Such goods are considered internal for two reasons: first, because they are necessarily attached with practices of this or that kind, and secondly "because they can only be identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question. Those who lack the relevant experience are incompetent thereby as judges of internal goods."[71] So the goods internal to a practice can only be fully experienced and judged by participation in that practice, something often forgotten in the days of 'google experts' claiming positions of authority over actual participants in a practice.[72]

For MacIntyre, practices involve standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods.[73] The goods which represent the teloi of a given practice enable one to develop virtues by aiming towards them, and: "To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them. It is to subject my own attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to the standards which currently and partially

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[70] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188, emphasis original.
[71] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188-89.
[72] Despite this seemingly exclusionary claim, MacIntyre's words "…or some other game of that specific kind" point in the direction of overlap between practices with similar goods and virtues, as well as forms and functions. For example, one might argue that a pianist is better positioned to judge the goods of an accordionist than a blacksmith is.
[73] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.

define the practice."[74] This highlights an important position of MacIntyre's, which helps him reject subjectivism and emotivist analyses of judgment: that in matters of taste, there *should* be disputes – taste is not a position one can take in relation to any phenomenon to abscond from being beholden to standards of rational judgment which can be critiqued.[75]

Despite one necessarily submitting to the standards of judgment within a given practice, MacIntyre is not taking a conservative position. He notes that all practices – like all traditions – have a *history*, and thus

> the standards are not themselves immune from criticism, but nonetheless we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best standards realized so far. … If, on starting to play baseball, I do not accept that others know better than I when to throw a fast ball and when not, I will never learn to appreciated good pitching let alone to pitch.[76]

This raises another important point: that the successful performance of this or that action within a given practice is revealed as a good which is only intelligible *within* that practice.[77]

Indeed, the engaging in practical action within a practice helps progress the individual who undertakes it:

> Individuals discover in the ends of any such practice goods common to all who engage in it, goods internal to and specific to that particular type of practice, which they can make their own only by allowing their participation in the activity to effect a transformation in the desires which they initially brought with them to the activity. Thus in the course of doing whatever has to be done to achieve those goods, they also transform themselves through what is at once a change in their desires and an acquisition of those intellectual and moral virtues and those intellectual, physical and imaginative skills necessary to achieve the goods of that particular practice.[78]

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[74] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.
[75] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.
[76] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.
[77] Beadle, "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice," 231. "A triple summersault, the hallmark of successful performance in trapeze is intelligible as a good only within the context of the practice of a particular type of artistic display—the effort and risk required to develop and sustain such performance is unintelligible outside of such a context." This is one of the things that Beadle argues makes businesses impossible to categorize as a practice, given that the goods within a business are all technical and thus intelligible to those outside the business. See also Ron Beadle "MacIntyre's Influence in Business Ethics," in *Handbook of Virtue Ethics in Business*, (eds.) A. Sison, J. Fontrondona and G. Beabout, (New York: Springer, 2016), 59-67.
[78] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken," 225-26.

Practices, thus, motivate the widening of horizons of the individuals engaged in them.[79] This widening of horizons can itself be potentially revolutionary in its rejection of various economic and technological triumphs of our age,[80] indeed it is only through practices that the liberal "standpoint of civil society [can] be transcended."[81]

According to Macintyre, as "internal goods share a symbiotic relation with practices so practice share such a relationship with institutions."[82] No practice can "survive or flourish outside of some relatively permanent institutional structure."[83] These represent the external goods which MacIntyre referred to,[84] such as prestige, status, power, and money.[85] *Institutions* are not, however, to be confused with practices:

> Chess and physics and medicine are practices; chess clubs, laboratories, universities and hospitals are institutions. … [But] no practice can survive for any length of time unsustained by institutions. 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 the common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution.[86]

He goes on to note how the role of virtues in practices are essential for helping resist the corrupting power of institutions.[87] Indeed, despite the fact that practices are dependent on institutions "the inappropriate use of external goods is also the greatest threat to them."[88] While practices are never a mere collection of technical skills,[89] despite often *making use* of technical skills, institutions are typified by technical skills. Institutions are concerned primarily with external goods, and so technical skills – which do not *in themselves* account for the ends which they serve – are the typical

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[79] For further discussion specifically on the question of desire, see §2.3 below.
[80] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 232.
[81] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 234.
[82] Beadle, "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice," 231.
[83] Beadle, "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice," 231.
[84] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190-91, 194.
[85] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 197.
[86] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.
[87] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194, this will be discussed further in the section on virtues.
[88] Russell Keat, "Ethics, Markets, and MacIntyre," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 245.
[89] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193.

utilitarian means of the day.[90] Practices, on the other hand, are internally capable of setting their own ends.[91]

Perhaps finally of importance is how practices not only connect with social spaces outside the practice (which will be discussed in the coming subsection), but how the individual members of a practice share standards which are both individual and collective. MacIntyre gives the example of a fishing crew:

> Consider how, within the context of at least certain types of practice, shared standards of success and failure make the application of such conceptions relatively unproblematic, as, for example, among the crews of a fishing fleet. Their standards of success and failure are set by their shared goals … Two kinds of shared achievement provide the goods internal to this kind of practice: that which belongs to the attainment of excellence in the cooperative activity of fishing, the excellence or lack of it of each crew member in playing her or his part contributing to the excellence or lack of it of the whole crew, and that which belongs to the excellence attained in sustaining the lives of the households from which the crew members came and to which they return. The range of uses of 'good' and cognate expressions will be intelligible in terms of the structures of activity of the crew and the household.[92]

It is *the actions of the individual*, in relation to *collective standards* which allow for understandings and achievement of excellence. This importantly draws a difference between individual *qua* individual, and individual *qua* member of social group, with the former sometimes identifying these standards of excellence as obstacles to, and the latter identifying these standards as means to, achieving satisfaction of this or that preference.[93] MacIntyre expands on this example of fishing by drawing on the practice of share fishing in Denmark, where every crew member is a partner in an enterprise and so, unlike corporate fishing, each individual "finds it difficult not to recognize three related common goods, those of family, crew, and local community, and achieve their own individual ends in and through cooperating to achieve those common goods," further to this, "their work is not a means to an external end but is constitutive of a way of life, the sustaining of which is itself an end."[94] Practices and institutions, just like the identification of common goods and capitalist individualism, are unfortunately intertwined but also necessarily opposed in many ways.

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[90] See the discussion in §2.2 above for elaboration on technical skills.
[91] Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 40.
[92] MacIntyre, "An Interview for Cogito," 273.
[93] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 174-75.
[94] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 179.

MacIntyre, in giving his account of practices also provides an important note: that the capitalist idea that the individual has to be contra the collective is a falsifiable assumption – and not just historically, but today.[95]

Lastly, *crafts* represent a more technical phenomenon than practices, which require firm embedding within a given tradition. Developing his idea of a 'craft,' MacIntyre notes that someone who is mastering a craft has to be able to make the important distinction between what *appears to be good*, versus what really *is good* – a distinction he argues can only be made initially in retrospect – and what is good for me here and now, versus what is good in an unqualified sense.[96] He claims that it is "the possession and transmission of this kind of ability to recognize in the past what is and what is not a guide to the future which is at the core of any adequately embodied tradition. A craft in good order has to be embodied in a tradition in good order."[97] What MacIntyre doesn't do here, however, is more fully define a craft – as it is it seems to be any task w*ith some relation to the good* or to which *conceptions of the good are relevant to its doing and mastery*; conceptions which can only be perfected through *learning processes* which themselves are only possible *over a period of time*.

While practices as MacIntyre describes them may be disconnected from one another insofar as they are 'self-sufficient' in the manner he has described (being able to set their own ends with their own standards of excellence and knowledge of the virtues which point one towards those standards), MacIntyre's account of crafts seems a little emptier. Is a craft anything which can be mastered, and if so, does this mastery not entail an account of excellence internal to the thing which would make it merely a parallel to a practice? While MacIntyre has yet to specify a difference, I would argue that a practice is a more general concept, while a craft is an attempt to conceptualize technical skills, with an eye to the good, embodied within a *tradition*. Noting that a craft in good order must be embodied in a tradition in good order,[98] MacIntyre seems to imply that the skills

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[95] A point which may draw from Marx's distinction between private and personal property. See Karl Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (ed.) Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2016), 65.
[96] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Version of Moral Enquiry*, 127.
[97] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 128.
[98] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 128. There is another possible interpretation: MacIntyre give moral philosophy as an example of a craft, specifically "of philosophical enquiry insofar as it addresses moral enquiry." This could be interpreted as a means of making sense of some of the specific foci within a given tradition, and also within given practices. For instance, moral philosophy could be a craft within the tradition of

acquired in the learning of a craft are necessary in a broader sense in the maintenance of a tradition, and thus that a craft is necessarily a part of a tradition. Whereas a practice *can* be self-standing (i.e., Chess), a craft is necessarily embedded in a wider tradition which it both provides for in the skills it inculcates and is provided for in the social and historical context it is cradled within and the initial and overarching ends to which the mastery of the craft aim.

2.3 Virtue Ethics and Human Desire

Virtues have been a core concern for Aristotelian ethicists since, well, Aristotle. The association of virtue ethics with Aristotle has been rather a baby/bathwater sort of one, with Aristotle's outdated positions relating to women, slaves, physics, etc., having largely been used as means of discrediting Aristotle's work as a whole. MacIntyre has noted, using his traditions-theoretic approach, that Aristotle can be used to critique himself and overcoming these problematics which by contemporary standards fail the most basic tests of science or ethics.[99]

This focus on virtue in MacIntyre represents a break with his Marxist past theorizing, and an attempt to solidify the core phenomena which make up a good person and a good life.[100] This does *not*, however, represent an absolute rejection of Marx, and Blackledge notes repeatedly the remaining Marxian notes within MacIntyre's contemporary work.[101] Indeed, given Marx's Aristotelian influences, this shift in focus does necessitate a rejection of Marx in favour of Aristotle any more than MacIntyre's critiques of capitalism necessitate a rejection of Aristotle in favour of Marx. Regardless of the strength of any remaining Marxian elements, MacIntyre's ethics have certainly become *more* Aristotelian over the course of his career. Despite this, Blackledge is right to note a continuity between the young, Marxist MacIntyre, and older, Aristotelian MacIntyre, as his earlier work is similarly concerned with a need to not merely reproduce society through descriptive work but engage in ethical challenges which can potentially change – and improve –

Aristotelianism, but so could logic, or aesthetics, etc. In this manner, 'crafts' as a concept helps to flesh out technical divisions of labour within a given tradition.

[99] Cary J. Nederman, "Men at Work: *Poesis*, Politics and Labor in Aristotle and Some Aristotelians*." *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 18-19.

[100] Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism: A Road not Taken," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 216.

[101] Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism," 225-6; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Social Practices, Marxism and Ethical Anti-Capitalism," *Political Studies*, 57, (2009): 868-71, 874, 877, 880-81; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a critic of Marxism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 88, no. 4, (2014): 705-24.

society.[102] It is in part from this that MacIntyre's focus on substantive, rather than procedural, ethics evolved.[103] For further discussion on the overlap between Aristotelian and Marxian influences in MacIntyre (and Aristotelian influences on Marx), see Chapter 3, §3.1, and Chapter 4, §4.3.(c) and §4.4.(a), (b), (c), & (d).

While virtues may appear – as they relate to questions of practices and traditions – to be merely utilitarian, procedural, or habitual, MacIntyre challenges this being the sum total of virtues. Indeed, virtues are means *and* ends from this Aristotelian perspective.[104] While habit plays a role – from Aristotle onwards – in the development of virtues, virtues themselves are substantive capacities which allow for human action aimed towards the telos of some good. It is important here to note that MacIntyre's account of human action is one where agency and habit are differentiated. While habit may develop capacities, it is agency that deploys those capacities in the world through choice.[105] Despite this, it is indeed the case that MacIntyre's account of practices and virtues are necessarily intertwined. One's virtues are actional,[106] as well as dispositional,[107] and embedded within the accounts of excellence of this or that practice. Such virtues can produce excellences specific to the goods internal to a given practice, but it is through many of these virtues that we also develop excellences relevant to goods external to a given practice as well.[108]

While virtues can represent a range of human capacities and excellences, what ties them to ethics? From the natural law approach of the Stoics and Scholastics, to Kant's deontological

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[102] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162.
[103] Bill Bowring, "Misunderstanding MacIntyre on Human Rights," *Analyse & Kritik,* 30 (2008): 208-9.
[104] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 149. "[T]he exercise of the virtues is not … a means to the end of the good for man. For what constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life. We thus cannot characterize the good for man adequately without already having made reference to the virtues. And within the Aristotelian framework the suggestion therefore that there might be some means to achieve the good for man without the exercise of the virtues makes no sense."
[105] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 156. MacIntyre demonstrates this well when he differentiates between understanding as a *static* phenomenon, and action as an *active* one. When challenging the either/or dilemma within micro-macro considerations of the human sciences, MacIntyre notes that the dilemma "separates understanding and action. Understanding and the lack of it are both a condition of inaction." See §2.4 for further discussion of human action.
[106] Reiss Kruger, "MacIntyre's Mean: Overcoming a Nietzschean-Weberian Spectrum of Excess and Deficiency," *Empresa Y Humanismo,* 27, no. 1, (2024): 68. See §2.3 & §2.4 for further discussion on the interrelation between virtue and human action.
[107] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 149.
[108] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 237. MacIntyre gives the example of farming as a practice which produces virtues applicable outside the practice.

approach to ethics, there has long lingered an odour of legalistic determinism to ethics – regardless of whether it was based on divine or deontic universal law.[109] Indeed, there was a long period between Aristotle and the modern day where the ideas of 'virtue' and 'ethics' were completely disconnected,[110] in part because considerations of law and the question of agency and human action were divorced. Protestants, for instance, moved from the opinion that divine law was there to be agentively obeyed, to the opinion that it was a "given, not to be obeyed, but to show man's incapacity to obey it, even by grace."[111] Likewise, Kant spent his career creating a rational framework for universal, categorical imperatives, which could not account for the impact desire might have on human agency and the habits – virtuous or otherwise – which enable and direct moral decision-making. An elaboration on MacIntyre's account of desire will follow below, but first the challenges virtue ethicists face in the form of such deontological, deterministic natural law, and later consequentialist, approaches need to be laid out.

On the one hand, we have the absolute predestination of Calvinism, which has space for human action insofar as humans can *do* things, but no space for the question of agency, as such actions are not consequential or impactful in any way on future – particularly on whether one is a member of the elect or not – as this has already been divinely predetermined.[112] On the other hand, the Kantian deontic tradition did not include the question of reward for moral action – moral action was simply rational: to be rational was to be moral and vice versa. This approach is one which was challenged by both conservatives of his day like Möser, who emphasized the importance of political practice and experience over abstract ideas, and liberals like Rehberg and Gentz, on the other hand, who considered Kant too conservative in his demanding respect for the law. Further to this, Schiller and Humboldt sought to expand on areas lacking in Kant's account, specifically his absence of attention to the psychological bases of our political decision-making, and a lacking account of man's character.[113] For Kant, the question of duty is central to ethics. This implies a certain amount of agency, as the human actor chooses to follow or not follow moral law, and so for humans "the motive provided by the idea of the highest possible earthly good, attainable

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[109] G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy*, 33, no.124, (January, 1958): 4-5.
[110] Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," 4-5; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.
[111] Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," 5, fn. 2.
[112] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 83, 85-87, 93, 101, 211.
[113] Hans S. Reiss (ed.), "Introduction," in *Kant: Political Writings*, (ed.) H. S. Reiss, (trans.) H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12-13.

through his collaboration, is therefore not that of his own intended happiness, but only that of the idea as an end in itself and of obedience to it as a duty."[114] Such attention to duty requires a total separation of one's "desire for happiness from the concept of duty, in order to preserve the latter's purity."[115] It is in this focus on duty to universal rational laws that we see the emergence of his *categorical* imperative, or acting, or willing to act, only "in such a way that you can wish your maxim to become a universal law (irrespective of what the end in view may be)."[116] This Kant distinguished from *hypothetical* imperatives, which involved human desires, thus disconnecting the question of ethics from the question of desire.[117]

This formulation of the categorical imperative falls foul of its inability to imbue a notion of character which might be considered virtuous by MacIntyre and others. This is demonstrated by MacIntyre, who, citing Kant's famous example of deception towards King Friedrich Wilhelm II, demonstrates that the categorical imperative against lying does not prevent one from clever deception,[118] this is of course *despite* Kant's confirmation, against Constant's critiques of his 'not lying to the murderer at the door' example,[119] that "truthfulness in assertions … is a human being's formal duty to everybody, whatever the disadvantage that may ensue to oneself or to another."[120] Lying, for Kant, wrongs humanity regardless of the circumstances, and in so doing one also wrongs themselves,[121] and despite a range of interpretations on Kant since the publishing of *The Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*,[122] Kant himself cemented the intractability of the categorical imperatives by arguing in response to critics of his day that "all practical principles of justice – such as the prohibition of lying – must contain strict truths, and the principles here called *middle principles* can only contain the closer definition of their application to actual cases … and

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[114] Immanuel Kant, "The Relation of Theory to Practice in Morality in General," in *Kant: Political Writings*, (ed.) H. S. Reiss, (trans.) H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65, fn.
[115] Kant, "The Relation of Theory to Practice in Morality in General," 69.
[116] Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch," in *Kant: Political Writings*, (ed.) H. S. Reiss, (trans.) H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 122.
[117] Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals with On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philosophic Concerns, 3rd Edition, (trans.) James W. Ellington, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), 25-27.
[118] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Truthfulness and Lies: What Can We Learn from Kant?" in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 123.
[119] Helga Varden, "Kant and Lying to the Murderer at the Door … One More Time: Kant's Legal Philosophy and Lies to Murderers and Nazis," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 41, no. 4, (November, 2010): 404-6.
[120] Kant, as cited in MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 127.
[121] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 128.
[122] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 125-29.

never exceptions to them."[123] One of the elements that this account of ethical duty leaves out is demonstrated when MacIntyre points out that if others were to discover

> what I said or did was well designed to mislead, as it was in Kant's own case, [they] will probably in the future treat me, and possibly others, as less trustworthy. But it is not this possible consequence of injury to trust that matters; what matters is the avoidance of the assertion of falsity.[124]

This demonstrates that Kant's deontological approach to moral maxims, one which in some cases "excludes maxims that ought not to be excluded" and in other cases "fails to exclude maxims that ought to be excluded"[125] is *too rigid*, acting as an *impersonal rule* for determining *personal action*. It is incapable of dealing with what Anscombe calls 'borderline cases' due to its inflexibility (see below) and is lacking insofar as it disregards several aspects of the human which MacIntyre stresses: the narrative continuity of the individual, the character we develop and present to the world through our actions, and the importance of the social spaces we inhabit and the opinions of our peers.

Returning to Weber we can see that despite the Calvinist trend towards predetermination, there were attempts to re-empower human action and agency in the Protestant tradition, avoiding the fatalism of predestiny. Both Baxter and Bailey hinted at divine election as a *reward* for particular action(s)[126] – a theme which remained present in the Catholic tradition. So, while Kant distinguishes ethical action from action based on desire, Weber notes that even deterministic Calvinists recognized a role for human desire in ethical action. We can see this influence also in MacIntyre, whose rejection of determinism remains strong throughout his work, for if the potential for accident disappears, so too does truth.[127]

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[123] Kant, as cited in MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 130, emphasis added. MacIntyre elaborates this regarding those who seek to use conflicting duties, such as one's duty to help those in need and one's duty not to lie, to create space to allow for exceptions and prioritization of duty: "[b]ut this notion of priority is quite alien to Kant himself where matters of duty are concerned. Kant does indeed recognize that "two grounds of obligation can be conjoined in a subject," so that a conflict may seem to arise, but if so, one of the grounds is not in fact a duty … Where perfect duties such as that of truthfulness are concerned, each can give way to no other ground of obligation." (132).

[124] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 124.

[125] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 126.

[126] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 144-45.

[127] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Marxism of the Will," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 72. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 88-108, for his discussion of (un)predictability.

Since the publication of G.E.M. Anscombe's famous work "Modern Moral Philosophy" there have been a rise in so-called 'virtue revivalists,' attempting to move away from the shallowness of consequentialist ethics,[128] as well as divine law theories of ethics, towards the question of character traits. In doing so, virtue ethicists have fallen into two broad camps. The first, building off Anscombe and the works of Phillipa Foot, have rejected entirely the question of 'morally right action,' while others have attempted to give an account of morally right action.[129] MacIntyre has taken a somewhat orthogonal approach, and has been concerned with the importance of human action to the development and maintenance of virtues since his turn towards virtue ethics, but he rejects consequentialist necessities for accounts of 'morally right action' to deal with the endless 'moral situations' one comes across. In addition to this he is more influenced by Weber than Kant insofar as he sees the question of desire as centrally related to the question of virtue ethics.[130]

Before proceeding, a brief elaboration of what is meant by consequentialism seems appropriate, given the range of influence, and interpretation, consequentialism has. Consequentialism broadly understood is a range of normative theories which concern themselves with the consequences – or potential consequences – of action as the primary concern of one considering whether an action or position is to be considered ethical. Classical examples include Benthamite and Millsian utilitarianism, which try to quantify the good of an action with the idea of 'utility.' More contemporary versions of this include Effective Altruism (pioneered variously by Peter Singer[131] and William MacAskill[132]), which can range from more welfarist in its outlook to less, and more short- and long-term in its range of consideration.[133] Regardless of its form, whether utilitarian, Effective Altruist, or otherwise, consequentialism's primary concern is

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[128] Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," 10.
[129] John Hacker-Wright, "Anscombe, Foot, and Contemporary Virtue Ethics," *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 44, (2010): 209-11.
[130] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 1-69. The question of desire will be discussed below.
[131] Ricky Mouser, "Mutual Aid as Effective Altruism," *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 33, no. 2, (2023): 201. Mouser notes Singer's argument that given that there are usually no shortage of applicants of jobs with charities, it is more effective to work in finance to maximize your charitable impact (201).
[132] William MacAskill, "Effective Altruism: Introduction," *Essays in Philosophy*, 18, no. 1, (2017): 1-5; William MacAskill, "The Definition of Effective Altruism," in *Effective Altruism: Philosophical Issues*, (eds.) Hilary Greaves and Theron Pummer, (Oxford University Press, 2019): 11-28.
[133] Kieran Dearden, "Effective Altruism After Sam Bankman-Fried," (2024). https://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/effective-altruism-after-sam-bankman-fried/

consequence, and thus efficiency/effectiveness is always a mainstay of its ethical calculation. Examples given by Dearden demonstrate this well in relation to Effective Altruism:

> If it takes $3500 to prevent an individual from dying of malaria by supplying mosquito nets, and $8000 to prevent another individual from dying of cancer by administering chemotherapy, all other things being equal, the effective altruist will invest in mosquito nets and not chemotherapy. The other major component of effective altruism entails the consideration of cost-efficiency over time, where one must weigh up the benefits of being altruistic now or hold off for greater gains in the future. For example, one could donate $10,000 per year for ten years to an effective charity, or invest that same amount into an index fund, wait ten years, and then donate $110,000 instead (inflation notwithstanding). All else being equal, the effective altruist chooses to invest and wait, as the effectiveness of the same resources is greater if one saves instead of spends.[134]

In these examples, we can see Weberian instrumentalism creeping into ethical consideration, where the desire for utility, effectiveness, or whatever one wishes to call it – a concern for means – is of higher consideration than a concern for ends. From a Kantian view, this will inevitably lead to the treating of humans as means rather than ends. In addition to these issues, this Effective Altruist position with its focus on efficiency tends to make one blind to time, as in the ten years one waits for a return on their investment, the charity in question could either fall apart or let the community it supports down in its capacities as a charity. Boiling 'efficiency' down to 'cost in money' is problematic on many levels.

This problem is evident especially when one considers the so-called 'longtermist' trend within Effective Altruism, where projections are so far into the future in their calculation for effectiveness becomes meaningless. Again, Dearden provides an excellent summary of this:

> When considering the impacts of welfare projects targeting people half a million years in the future, evidence-based methodologies have next to nothing to work with. Philosophical reasoning allows longtermism to value these future individuals to the same degree as present individuals but cannot possibly evaluate the needs or capabilities of time-distant people beyond binary states of life and death. No reasonable amount of present evidence would be sufficient to establish the need or relative cost-efficiency of bed-nets at such a distant point in the future, for example.[135]

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[134] Kieran Dearden, "Effective Altruism After Sam Bankman-Fried," (2024).
[135] Dearden, "Effective Altruism After Sam Bankman-Fried."

When considered with an eye towards a combination of approaches including, but not limited to, Hegelian theories of history, risk theory, and indeed MacIntyre's own approach to the predictability of future events, such trends towards 'longtermism' as demonstrated by Dearden render Effective Altruism inherently methodologically ineffective – without even considering the question of ethical effectiveness. This trend towards consequences beyond the horizon of rational consideration is a risk in any consequentialist approach, as the individual human agent gets either lost or instrumentalized in large-scale calculations or has their understanding of the good diminished to questions of effectiveness. Interestingly, these trends have found an even more problematic formulation in the entrepreneurial world which seems to be most concerned with 'effective' approaches to altruism, as evidenced by the initial findings of Olumekor, Mohiuddin, and Su, who have connected Effective Altruism to the so-called 'dark triad' of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy which run rampant in the upper echelons of the business world.[136]

Returning to Anscombe, these issues in consequentialism are raised from a virtue ethics perspective when she well-describes the problems that come with such consequentialist approaches when she discusses 'borderline cases' in ethical consideration:

> Now if you are an Aristotelian, or a believer in divine law, you will deal with a borderline case by considering whether doing such-and-such in such-and-such circumstances is ... a thing to do or not. This would be the method of casuistry; and while it may lead you *to stretch a point on the circumference, it will not permit you to destroy the center*. But if you are a consequentialist, the question ... is a stupid one to raise. … [T]he consequentialist, in order to be imagining borderline cases at all, has of course to assume some sort of law or standard according to which this is a borderline case, [w]here then does he get the standard from? In practice the answer invariable is: from the standards current to his society or his circle. And it has in fact been the mark of all these philosophers that they have been extremely conventional; *they have nothing in them by which to revolt against the conventional standards of their sort of people*; it is impossible that they should be profound.[137]

In critiquing consequentialists thusly, Anscombe raises two concerns which we can see taken up by MacIntyre. *First*, because accounts of the virtues are necessarily social and historical, they have a 'center' by reference to which a 'circumference' can be conceptualized. Because of this, borderline cases can be fit into a flexible, but *grounded*, theory of ethics. *Second*, the lack of such

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[136] Michael Olumekor, Muhammad Mohiuddin, and Zhan Su, "Effective Altruism and the Dark Side of Entrepreneurship," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, (2023): 1-9.
[137] Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," 10-11, emphases added.

grounding for consequentialist ethics results in an inability to reject or revolt against convention (at least by reference to the ethics the consequentialist is proceeding from). MacIntyre builds the first concern into his account of traditions and practices – allowing virtues to be social and historical, without being entirely relative, because of their grounding in living traditions and practices, which are self-capable, insofar as they are functional, of growing in response to precisely these types of 'borderline cases.' This also takes up Anscombe's second concern, as it is through MacIntyre's account of traditions responding to and overcoming things like epistemological crises that they can potentially represent the bases for revolutionary change, rather than mere replication of convention.[138]

Returning to the question of truthfulness/lying, we can see further evidence that MacIntyre is not consequentialist. Drawing on his critiques and adaptations of Mill and Kant in his own account of truthfulness, MacIntyre argues that he has

> identified two distinct sources for the universal human concern over the harms and dangers of lying, one a concern primarily with truth and one a concern primarily with trust. … For to understand the rules prescribing unqualified truthfulness as governing relationships, rather than the individuals apart from their relationships, is also to understand how the concern for truth and the concern for trust can become complementary. Central to my trust in you as … someone to whom I stand in a relationship of commitments … is my confidence that on any matter relevant either to our relationships or to those other relationships to which each of us is committed I will never be told by you anything other than what you believe to be true.[139]

In this manner, MacIntyre develops an account of truthfulness wherein lies becomes understood as "small or large betrayals and the virtues of integrity and fidelity are understood to be at stake in all those situations in which the virtue of truthfulness is at stake."[140] While there are considerations to consequences in such an account insofar as lying is bad because of the betrayal(s) it represents to *both* our relationships *and* our virtues, the fact that such considerations are not a means of comparison between the outcomes, such that one outcome is seen as 'good enough' compared to

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[138] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 190-92. MacIntyre distinguishes such revolutionary change from "mindless deviance and revolt" (191) by grounding revolution in the critical capacities of practically rational individuals, who can come to a rationally justifiable confidence in statements such as "Even although it is almost universally agreed in this social order that in these circumstances someone in my role should act thus, I judge that I should act otherwise" (191).
[139] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 141.
[140] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 141.

another makes it non-consequentialist. For MacIntyre, lying is bad because it undermines our relationships, our understanding of truth, and our capacity to engage in good faith in a moral life – all things based in our relationships. Giving the examples of a Dutch housewife lying to protect a Jewish child to a Nazi officer, and a Massachusetts single mother who defended the life of her infant child against an estranged and violent former lover – who she ended up killing in defence of the child – MacIntyre demonstrates a sociological rather than metaphysical grounding for ethics.[141] The *nature* of the relationships between parties in these examples was a determining factor in their actions.

MacIntyre argues that while we are normally bound to truth for three mutually reinforcing reasons: 1) without truthfulness we cannot hope to effectively learn; 2) we need truthfulness to "put our social relationships question," and 3) truthfulness is a virtue "without which the corrupting power of phantasy cannot be held in check."[142] In addition to this, MacIntyre argues that we are bound to defend the relationships in our lives, for if and when individuals external to a given relationship

> aggress against those who are bound to each other in some particular relationship, then it is always someone's responsibility to do whatever is necessary, so far as they can, to defend that relationship against aggression. Whose responsibility this is will depend upon the character of the relationship. What their responsibility requires them to do will depend upon the nature of the aggression.[143]

This sociological grounding for ethics is couched in the mutual dependence humans have as moral beings, demonstrated in the learning and living out of moral action only in, and through, social relationships. The Dutch housewife was not beholden to truth-telling given her knowledge of the violence to be enacted upon a child to whom she had a relationship - a relationship which demanded of her the duty of defense. The Nazi officer was someone external not only to this relationship, but to *any* relationship with the Dutch housewife. Should she have acted further, say, killing the Nazi officer, "the consequences would have been a reign of murderous terror directed against the entire community, including the children whom she was pledged to protect."[144] While this may seem consequentialist at first glance, it is an individual's defence of a series of

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[141] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 135.
[142] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 136-37.
[143] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 138.
[144] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 139.

relationships (a child, a community, etc.) combined with a Thomist understanding that good is to be done and evil avoided which grounds this woman's justification for her actions.[145] MacIntyre continues the example by noting that

> killing the Nazi official would have done unnecessary harm, provided only that she was able instead to lie convincingly. In this type of case the normally illegitimate power exercised by the successful liar becomes legitimate, first because and insofar as it provides a defence against the prior illegitimate exercise of power by the aggressor, and second because by lying she avoids other more harmful uses of power.[146]

Here we can see that despite considerations of consequence, there are underlying ethical considerations of both natural law and human social connection grounding MacIntyre's ethical claims. He is considerate of circumstance, like Mill, without being lost in comparison, and he is considerate of questions of universality, like Kant, without being disconnected from circumstance. MacIntyre's ethical concerns may have one foot in natural law, but they have another foot strongly rooted in *practical consideration* and the virtues which enable the goods of *social relationship*.[147]

These virtues, for MacIntyre, require a certain kind of practical habituation.[148] It is not just the case that such habituations are required to allow for understanding and responsiveness to argument, but "also that only those who have undergone such habituation will be in a position to theorize well about issues of practice."[149] This role of practice as Aristotle conceived it helps distinguish virtue ethics from the theoretical ethics which very much still follow the endless consequentialist considerations critiqued by Anscombe. MacIntyre notes that the "construction and evaluation of sound moral theories, unlike the construction and evaluation of sound theories in the physical sciences, require more than intellectual virtues. They require a particular kind of initiation into and participation in a particular kind of moral and political practice."[150] This clearly cements MacIntyre's account of the virtues with his account of practices, as it is precisely these excellences which make up the means to various practical ends, as well as ends-in-themselves, that

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[145] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, (trans.) The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Claremont, CA: Coyote Canyon Press, 2018), I-II, q. 94, art 2.
[146] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 139.
[147] See §2.5 below for discussion of MacIntyre's concern for practical philosophy.
[148] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Renaissance Aristotelians," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 3.
[149] MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Renaissance Aristotelians," 3.
[150] MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Renaissance Aristotelians," 4.

allow practices to contribute to the wider flourishing of human life. By this I mean to say that virtues cannot exist in the abstract – one is always a virtuous *something.* If, for example, one is a virtuous teacher (noting of course MacIntyre's distinction that teaching is not a practice in-itself, but rather a component part of various practices), one must have *hupomonē* (patience), *epistēmē* (knowledge), and *phrónēsis* (practical wisdom). Patience represents a means to other goods, as one is capable of resisting frustration or irritation with, or giving up hope on, a student. Knowledge is both a good in itself and a means to other goods as it is the source from which one's teaching of others derives. And one's practical wisdom allows one to respond to the problems of life as they arise in a measured manner, representing a means to teaching well and to living well in a broader sense. The excellences within a practice allow for the grounding of virtue to the living out of that practice, to human action, which in turn ties the question of human flourishing to a state of becoming, rather than a singular telos one achieves and then is done.

It is here one might ask of MacIntyre's practical habituation: 'practical habituation of *what*?' The missing component, and the component missing in Kant's deontology, is that of desire, the role it plays in human life, and the ways in which it can – and does – intertwine with rationalist considerations of directing one's life. This problematic detachment between morality and desire underlies any ethical approaches since Kant. Returning briefly to the above problematic of lying under a Kantian categorical imperative, MacIntyre argues that the formulation of the principles for ethical action must begin from a very different point from that which Kant began:

> Instead of first asking "By what principles am I, as a rational person, bound?" we have first to ask "By what principles are we, as actually or potentially rational persons, bound in our relationships?" We begin, that is, from within the social relationships in which we find ourselves, the institutionalized relationships of established social practices, through which we discover, and through which alone we can achieve, the goods internal to those practices, the goods that give point and purpose to those relationships, understanding them as always open to criticism, to possible modification or revision in the light of criticism, and even in the end to possible rejection, if they turn out not to be open to worthwhile modification or revision.[151]

Even the capacity to criticize such principles is "itself something characteristically acquired in and developed out of the experience of such relationships."[152] In this sense, our rationality – that

[151] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 135-36.
[152] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 136.

abstract element for Kant – is beholden to our social and historical circumstances insofar as when our choices are rationally effective, it is because of "appeals to already recognized or recognizable norms of criticism."[153] This necessary dependence upon others for our capacity as rational and moral actors must be recognized as essential to the development of any autonomy, which even when developed "does not then consist in total independence from and of the sentiments, judgments, and actions of others, but in an ability to distinguish those areas in which one ought to be independent and those where one ought to acknowledge dependence."[154] MacIntyre argues that autonomy in this form is "a necessary condition for achieving many, although not perhaps all, of those key goods without which our relationships no longer have point and purpose."[155]

This independence, or freedom, is represented in the ongoing example of acting to protect someone under your care, wherein doing so one seeks to answer two essential questions – whether explicitly or otherwise – whatever action is taken:

> Will this proposed action *effectively protect* whoever or whatever needs to be protected? And does this proposed action *go beyond what is needed* in harming the aggressor? The latter question matters because, insofar as I become a doer of harm beyond what is needed, I pass from being a defender of those unjustly attacked to being myself an unjust aggressor.[156]

While motivated by moral premises which could be considered universal – like Kant – MacIntyre is clearly motivated likewise by considerations of effectiveness – a focus of consequentialist ethics. Despite these similarities, he differs from both deontic and consequentialist ethics,[157] as noted above, by his "appeal to particular examples," a sociological concern demonstrated by conceiving "persons-in-social-relationship as the fundamental units of the moral life," and a teleological perspective.[158] Blackledge puts it well by recognizing that his engagement with the question of human desire and the role of freedom – as both a means and an end – to/of human liberation "allowed him to move from a standard Marxist critique of Kantianism to a powerful break with the vestigial influence of consequentialism" which had burdened Marxist ethics up until

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[153] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 136.
[154] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 136.
[155] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 136.
[156] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 139, emphasis added.
[157] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 140
[158] MacInytre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 140.

MacIntyre's time.[159] Indeed, because freedom was both a means and an end for MacIntyre, his ethical position, "contra the Kantians, required a strong anchorage in contemporary history, while, contra the consequentialists … was not a reified end that could be inaugurated by a variety of means."[160] MacIntyre's ethics were thus essentially based on a combination of *socially embedded desires, dependent rationality,* and *directed* – and direct*ing* – *practices*.

In arguing for such social embeddedness, dependence, directedness, as well as recognizing a certain level of pragmatic consideration for the happenstance of life, MacIntyre critiques not just Kant, but some idealist Marxists like Bernstein and Guevera.[161] MacIntyre argues that virtues are exemplified through our actions,[162] and to fully make sense of them – how they relate to us, and how we relate to them – requires accounts of practices, the narrative order of any single human life, and what constitutes a moral tradition.[163] While the aforementioned elements are discussed elsewhere throughout this Chapter, something which has been touched on in this section but not explained requires a fuller account: the role *desire* plays in MacIntyre's account.

By defining a virtue as an "acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices,"[164] MacIntyre is distinguishing virtues from the entirely instrumental goods which are external to practices.[165] Noting that "in any society which recognized only external goods competitiveness would be the dominant and even exclusive feature,"[166] MacIntyre opens space for the question of desire, as desire can motivate such *pleonexia*, but it can also be moulded towards good ends within the context of a practice wherein virtues are sought.

MacIntyre argues that desire plays a central role in human life, and lives often "go wrong on account of misdirected or frustrated desire."[167] Desire still relates to questions of rational decision-making for MacIntyre, unlike for Kant, as we can ask the question of ourselves and others

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[159] Paul Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire, and Revolution: Alasdair MacIntyre's Early Marxist Ethics," *History of Political Thought*, 26, no. 4, (Winter 2005), 709.
[160] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire, and Revolution," 709.
[161] MacIntyre, "Marxism of the Will," 74-75; see also MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 233.
[162] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 184.
[163] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.
[164] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191.
[165] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 196.
[166] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 196.
[167] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 1.

whether "we or they desire *what we or they had good reason to desire*, given their or our circumstances, character, relationships, and past history."[168] Desire cannot be done away with for MacIntyre. While Kant sees reason divorcing itself from desire, MacIntyre instead sees reason as a means for the *judgment of desire*, through which an individual in reflection – and in dialogue with other individuals – can redirect the ends of their desires as well as reshape their habits to aid in turning their desires towards virtue. Desires relate directly to questions of human agency and action for MacIntyre, because he differentiates them from bodily reactions:

> Consider the case of an experimental psychologist who is studying the effects of food deprivation on a number of subjects, including herself. One of those effects is an increasingly intense felt need for food. However, the experimenter *wants not to eat* …. For an extended period of time so that she can study the accompanying changes in herself. The *felt hunger is one thing, the desire to eat another*.[169]

This, of course, is the experience of an adult human. MacIntyre distinguishes this further from that of infants, "for whom the expression of desire just is the expression of felt need and the expression of frustration at not having that need met immediately."[170] MacIntyre claims such infants and human adults differ in at least three ways: *first*, the adult, when feeling some bodily need, is capable to reflexively question that need, whereas the infant cannot. "Such adults recognize that their needs, felt of otherwise, are one thing, what they want to do about satisfying or not satisfying them is quite another."[171] *Secondly*, adults can look beyond the present to "a series of futures … when it will become possible to achieve some objects of present desire that are not yet attainable."[172] They are, in a word, capable of recognizing and aiming towards *ends*. *Thirdly*, adults also have an awareness of their pasts, and even if they seldom reflect upon it they know that "their desires have a history, a history during which objects of desire have multiplied. Some of their earlier desires have been transformed, others replaced."[173]

These distinctions allow the adult individual to realize that they can direct themselves towards the ends of a particular practice, thus reaping the benefits of the goods of that practice

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[168] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 2, emphasis added.
[169] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 2, emphasis added.
[170] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 2.
[171] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 3.
[172] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 3.
[173] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 3.

through its virtuous living-out. However, this adoption of ends and benefit of goods requires that the individual allow

> their participation in the activity to effect a *transformation in the desires which they initially brought with them to the activity*. Thus in the course of doing whatever has to be done to achieve those goods, they *also transform themselves* through what is at once a change in their desires and an acquisition of those intellectual and moral virtues and those intellectual, physical and imaginative skills necessary to achieve the goods of that particular practice.[174]

The living of life for MacIntyre is always a negotiation between this and that desire, this and that end, this and that practice. Desires are *a given* which MacIntyre argues it is foolish to discard in any theory of ethics or human action, as it is often from the starting point of desire that we make decisions for ethical (or unethical) action.

This focus on desire as an essentially human starting point for a broader account of virtue ethics does not, however, fall into the trap of emotivism.[175] Quite the contrary, as MacIntyre argues that a "change in belief and development of a new habit result in changes in my desires,"[176] and it is *precisely our rational capacity to change beliefs and develop new habits* which ties rationality and desire into the narrative subjectivity of the individual life. Indeed, MacIntyre lays out two types of occasion where reason acts in relation to desire:

> Occasions of the first type are part of the fabric of everyone's life, occasions when we cannot avoid making choices that will dictate the shape of our future lives … Occasions of the second type are those when the routines of everyday life have been disrupted. … In such situations it requires little reflection to recognize that if I am to answer the question 'What shall I do?' I had better first pause and pose the question 'What is it that I want?' Somewhat more reflection is needed to recognize that I also need to think critically about my present desires, to ask 'Is what I now want what I want myself to want?' and 'Do I have sufficiently good reasons to want what I now want?' and still further reflection to recognize that I will be likely to go astray in answering these questions if I do not also ask how I came to be the kind of person that I now am, with the desires that I now have, that is, to ask about the history of my desires.[177]

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[174] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 225-26.
[175] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 11-14, 16-35. See also §2.10.(b).
[176] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 4.
[177] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 4. This is a good example of drawing elements of our prereflective backgrounds into the conscious foreground, something which will be discussed in §2.8.

Desires are thus, for MacIntyre, inherently tied to the rational reflections and choices we make as individuals. Indeed, they influence our dispositions in a multitude of ways.[178]

MacIntyre argues that desires can find expression in someone's thoughts and actions in a range of ways: "[a]t one extreme are idle wishes for states of affairs that are impossible and known to be impossible by those who wish for them. … At the other extreme are desires that translate immediately into action."[179] Of course, these represents ends of a spectrum filled with "a range of other cases."[180] What the whole range of desires have in common – *including* the end of the spectrum which desires something impossible – is that "our desires are expressed both in action and in those states of mind that motivate us to act."[181] Even desiring the impossible would result in action – due to the state of mind motivated by the desire – should situations change and the impossible suddenly appear possible.

While some have argued that there are a range of things which motivate one to action, including emotions, tastes, pro- and anti-attitudes, MacIntyre argues that any actions issuing from such motivators "do only because of their relationships to desires and to actions expressive of desires."[182] This account of desires does not fall into the trap of assuming that "every action must have some particular motivation of its own," as MacIntyre recognizes that this would "ignore how much of our activity is what it is because of the structures and patterns of each individual's normal day, normal week, normal year."[183] Indeed, this awareness allows MacIntyre to relate the general dispositions to act and react in "patterned ways" as "habits."[184]

Beside habits, there are further influences on our desires, including belief and imagination, as one's belief and imagination "combine to set limits to what [one] takes to be possible, and so to [their] present desires."[185] In a Gadamerian manner, belief and imagination provide the horizon of possibility for directing our desires to action. Consideration of desire is for MacIntyre necessarily tied to the question of human action, as well as rationality, as "[t]o have a good reason for desiring

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[178] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 5.
[179] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 5.
[180] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 6.
[181] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 6.
[182] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 6.
[183] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 6.
[184] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 7.
[185] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 7.

something … is to have a good reason for acting in some particular way."[186] The rational act implied here is not merely one of abstract reasoning about the good in a disconnected manner, but in a practical sense, for when MacIntyre asks "whether I do or do not have good reason or sufficiently good reason to satisfy this or that particular desire, I am asking what good or goods are or might be at stake in my acting *so as to satisfy it rather than some other desire*."[187] Such reasoning is always comparative – the reasoning between goods, between desires, and between actions – as well as potentially reflective. MacIntyre points this out by claiming that "to justify an action just is to show that the good to be achieved by so acting outweighs the good to be achieved by an alternative course of action,"[188] actions which are, as already noted, motivated by desires. Recognizing its role as a central motivating factor for human action, MacIntyre argues that desire cannot be sidestepped or disregarded in any account of ethics. This essential relationship provides an excellent backdrop for the wider question of human action which undergirds MacIntyre's work.

2.4 Human Action

MacIntyre has had a functional account of human action as central to his work for a large portion of his career, something essential to any position which claims a sociological grounding in history but allows for agency of the individual. Reason, MacIntyre argues, can give one direction, and indeed is a necessary element for the achievement of 'rational behaviour,'[189] whereby the *action* one undertakes can be considered 'free,'[190] and necessary for the achievement of any progress towards a given telos.[191] We can see from his accounts of traditions and practices that all social phenomena must be 'lived out' through the actions of individuals – that social reality is beholden to human action.[192] Part of this position comes from MacIntyre's critiques of Hegel's idealism – something MacIntyre rejects from both a Marxian and Aristotelian position of practical philosophy – and the over-focus on language and abstract knowledge and under-focus on practice by Left

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[186] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 8.
[187] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 8.
[188] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 9.
[189] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Determinism," *Mind*, 66, no. 261, (Jan., 1957): 35. "[T]o show that behaviour is rational is enough to show that it is not causally determined in the sense of being the effect of a set of sufficient conditions operating independently of the agent's deliberation or possibility of deliberation. So the discoveries of the physiologist and psychologist may indefinitely increase our knowledge of why men behave irrationally but they could never show that rational behaviour in this sense was causally determined."
[190] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 34-41.
[191] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 159.
[192] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology," 57.

Hegelians, as MacIntyre himself noted in some of his past work.[193] However, questions of human action undergird all of what MacIntyre might consider the salvageable parts of Hegel, with human action being "neither blind and goalless nor the mere implementation of means to an already decided end. Acting that is the bringing about of such an end by a calculated means certainly has a place, but a subordinate place, in human activity."[194] This is in part the reason why human affairs across history can only be fully understood *post hoc*, with the Owl of Minerva flying at dusk.[195]

Building on this rejection of Hegel, we see the Marxian concern with human action as grounding MacIntyre, as "one cannot first understand the world and only then act in it. How one understands the world will depend in part on the decision implicit in one's already taken actions. The wager of action [however] is unavoidable."[196] Indeed, MacIntyre claims that "the concept of human action is central to our enquiry," asking "[w]hat is it to understand any given piece of behaviour as a human action?"[197] In giving the example of nodding one's head, MacIntyre notes it

> may be a sign of assent to a question or it may be a nervous tick. To explain the nod as a way of saying 'Yes' to a question is to give it a role in the context of human action. To explain the nod as a nervous tick is to assert that the nod was not an action but something that happened to me. To understand the nod as a nervous tick we turn to the neurophysiologist for a causal explanation. To understand it as a sign of assent is to move in a different direction.[198]

This direction is the direction of asking for reasons for action, rather than automatic reactions over which the individual has no agentive control – a direction which concludes in making "both

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[193] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 19-22; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Marxist Tracts," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, 28. This is a phenomenon rampant within existentialist thought, as demonstrated by MacIntyre's critiques of Sartre for being lost in the conceptual, and trapped in the individual, as an artist rather than a theorist, see MacIntyre, "Sartre as a Social Critic," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, 204-8. For further explanation on the importance of language, as well as its limits, see Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," in *The Portable Marx*, 173-74. Marx notes that while language has import, it is only important insofar as it connects one to the material realm made up of other individuals: "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness as it exists for other men, and for that reason is really beginning to exist for me personally as well; for language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal has no 'relations' with anything, cannot have any. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product, and remains so long as men exist at all."

[194] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84.

[195] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84; Georg Wilhem Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, (Ed.) Allen W. Wood, (Trans.) H. B. Nisbet, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23.

[196] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Pascal and Marx: On Lucien Goldmann's *Hidden God*," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 84.

[197] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 56.

[198] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 56.

individual deeds and social practices intelligible as human actions by showing how they connect with characteristically human desires, needs, and the like."[199] The impact of human needs and desires on understanding whether a phenomenon is an action or a 'nervous tick' runs throughout MacIntyre's early Marxist position,[200] all the way through to his contemporary Thomist-Aristotelian position,[201] and parallels greatly Jürgen Habermas' attempts to distinguish between complex actions, basic actions, and non-actions.[202] As noted above in §2.3, we can see that for MacIntyre, human agents have some influence, even if indirectly through the (re)framing of one's mind, and habit production, on all their actions. These actions are of course framed by social and historical structures and expectations, but they are still different from the biologically automatic feeling of hunger, or the nervous response when a doctor knocks one of your knees.

Expanding on the importance of speech and writing, with language being *essentially* external (and *interactive*) insofar as it is social, MacIntyre gives the example that language must be "something that men do and make," not "merely a part of the given and made background."[203] MacIntyre cites Norman Malcolm on the example of the word 'cow,' who claims that

> What is necessary is that it should be playing a part in various activities, in calling, fetching, counting cows, distinguishing cows from other things and pictures of cows from pictures of other things. If the word has no place in activities ('language-games') of this sort, then it isn't a word for *cow*. To be sure I can sit in my chair and talk about cows and not be engaged in any of these activities – but what makes my words *refer* to cows is in fact that I have already mastered these activities: they lie in the background.[204]

In so doing, MacIntyre supports his claim, drawing on Wittgenstein, that "language is essentially social, essentially a matter of human activity and not at all to be understood mechanistically."[205]

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[199] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 58.
[200] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 58-66. See also, MacIntyre, "Determinism."
[201] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 1-13, 42-46, 120-36.
[202] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, (trans.) Thomas McCarthy. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 97.
[203] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162.
[204] Malcolm, cited in MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162, emphasis original.
[205] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162.

This question dividing language between an 'epistemic background' and an activity[206] turns one towards the importance MacIntyre places on the interaction between theory and practice.[207]

The question of language raises a larger question of the mind-body problem, which in turn bridges our discussion towards concerns of being and becoming in the following subsection. Building on the Hegelian challenges to the Cartesian mind-body problem, MacIntyre strongly ties human thought and action together by tying the individual to other individuals, and the mind to the body in a manner hinted at above in his discussion of nods as potential 'nervous ticks' or meaningful actions:

> Just as with ants or wasps or dolphins, the minimum unity for description cannot be the individual human body, but rather some social network, some set of bodies in physical and social relationships. Human bodies, that is, are partially constituted by their social relationships, just because their movements can only be intelligently characterized and represented in terms of social interaction.[208]

This consideration of humans as more than mere Cartesian isolates builds on two central themes: our animality and our sociality. In the latter we can see a strongly Meadian account which centers self-references and self-awareness as mediated by our social ties.[209] In the former we see MacIntyre tying our humanity to our animality.[210]

Elaborating on this critique of this element of Cartesianism, MacIntyre argues that while there are clear spaces for delineation between the 'I' and the 'body,' things are more complex than this:

> It is true of me that I am accountable for my actions and my omissions, that I am aware of the objects that I perceive, that I am able to reflect not only on my actions and my experiences, but also on my reflections on my reflections on my actions and my experiences. And none of these are true of my body. Yet interestingly what is true of my body is (generally) true of me. If my body is six foot tall, I am six foot tall. If my body aches, I ache. It is all too easy to conclude that there is something

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[206] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162. "Instead of the purposive concept of 'use' we get the naturalistic concept of 'usage'. The philosopher's task is not that of understanding the standards for success in language-using: it is the bleakly conservative one of recording and classifying how we all talk anyway. Language is not something that men do and make, it becomes merely a part of the given and made environment."
[207] Elaborated below in §2.6.
[208] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 95.
[209] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 95, 98.
[210] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*.

> referred to by 'I' that is other than, although intimately related to, what is referred to by 'my body.' But to conclude this would involve at least two kinds of error.[211]

These errors include first that of "supposing that there is something which I am over and above my body, namely, a disembodied human mind," something which MacIntyre stresses is impossible.[212]

MacIntyre goes on to claim that "[i]f a human body is an embodied mind, a human mind correspondingly is a set of powers that express themselves through a body."[213] This fusion of what philosophers typically distinguish as 'mental' and 'physical' capacities allows for a shared directionality for both mind and body.[214] MacIntyre exemplifies this by stating that when

> I pick up some object and hand it to you, there are not two things going on, the one to be characterized as the intentional act of giving something to somebody, the other as a set of changes in the muscles and nerves of the arm and the hand. There is one act or sequence of acts, one change or sequence of changes. The giving *is* the movement of the arm and hand.[215]

This seemingly radical statement requires some unpacking to understand. To aid in this, MacIntyre gives the example of thought being *expressed* in speech or in writing, while remaining *distinguishable* from such speech and writing.

Certainly, MacIntyre notes, episodes of thought regularly occur which do not find expression in speech or writing, "when the mind presents itself to itself as an inner theatre of reflections, images, and feelings. And these episodes do suggest that the powers of the mind can be exercised independently of their bodily expression."[216] However, MacIntyre argues that it is a mistake to isolate the mind in a Cartesian sense, or even to connect it to the world but in a hierarchical manner where the sum of all thought and action can be reduced to "a series of happenings in the brain."[217]

> Of course it is true that, whenever we think, neurons fire in particular areas of the brain. But when our thinking is expressed in speech or writing, neurons fire. And when we pick up objects with our hands, neurons fire. Thinking unexpressed in

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[211] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 96.
[212] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 96.
[213] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 96.
[214] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 96.
[215] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 96, emphasis original.
[216] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 97.
[217] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 97.

> speech or writing is of course accompanied by neuronal events, but it does not stand in the same relationship to occurrences in the brain that thinking expressed in speech or writing stands to the movements of the vocal chords or of the hands.[218]

How is this so? Again, paralleling Mead and Wittgenstein, MacIntyre notes the importance of the *externality of communication*:

> What makes this image an image of a schooner rather than of a frigate? What makes this feeling a feeling of anger rather than excitement? In each case the only answer is in terms of what this thought or image or feeling would be, if it were to receive bodily expression. … It is because my image, if it received verbal or pictorial expression, would be expressed as a description of or as a picture of a schooner that it is an image of a schooner. *What goes unexpressed is always expressible and the characteristics that we ascribe to it are ascribed in virtue of the characteristics that it would have if expressed*.[219]

The internal is necessarily reliant to some significant extend upon the confirmation and reflexivity available to it only upon its externalization for MacIntyre, a theme which can be seen throughout MacIntyre in the sociological grounding of his epistemology and ethics, as well as any accounts of human actions.

MacIntyre cements this claim by pointing to the *importance of metaphor* in our lives, noting that we are often so familiar with the metaphors we use on a daily basis that we need to remind ourselves that they are metaphors, "metaphors through which we situate our thoughts, images and feelings by analogy with what occurs in the public social world."[220] These terms and concepts

> which we employ in identifying and characterizing the inner life of the mind take their sense from their prior uses either to characterize acts in which thoughts, images, or feelings are expressed in bodily form or to name or describe other features of the public world. *The uses of those linguistic expressions without which we would be unable to identify and reflect upon the inner life of the mind are secondary to and dependent upon this prior set of uses*.[221]

Despite this necessary externality, thinking does by MacIntyre's understanding acquire a form of autonomy insofar as it "sets its own goals, it finds itself entangled in a variety of problems and unclarities, it identifies the constraints imposed by logical and conceptual necessities, and, as it

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[218] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 97.
[219] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 97-98, emphasis added.
[220] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98.
[221] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98, emphasis added.

moves towards and beyond its goals, it is always distinctively *my* thought, the thought of this particular thinker."[222] MacIntyre clarifies by describing particular thought as 'mine' by beginning from the "experiences afforded by my particular body," thus historically, socially, and *biologically* tying the self, and its thoughts and actions together.[223] While this situational origin is necessary, MacIntyre admits that such an identity "becomes in a significant way independent of the identity of my body" in part due to the distinction between perception – which is bound to "the body's immediate spatial environment" – and thought – which "can find its objects anywhere in time and space. It is, unlike the body, undetermined by physical location."[224] The result of all of this is that for MacIntyre one cannot help but understand one's thought as "simultaneously my thought, the embodied thought of this particular thinker with this particular body, and yet also thought that transcends the limitations that the spatiotemporal location of my body imposes on perception."[225] Despite this distinction, MacIntyre warns that because we are still beholden to the locus of a particular body, "we should resist any temptation to capitulate to dualist modes of thought, whether Platonic or Cartesian."[226] In rejecting these dualisms, MacIntyre is making the sociological claim that "human bodies are intelligible only as potentially and actually in relationship with others … Human bodies are *essentially, not accidentally social*," despite being made of non-social materials like flesh and bone.[227]

Such considerations of how internal thought is tied to external action and vice versa raise further questions. For instance, is there a distinction between epistemic and practical action? Does past action (which allows for mastery of language, as in the above examples, to sit 'in the background') count as part of the action made in a present moment (the present use of a past-learnt word, for instance)? Does habit, for instance, count as an action, or must one consciously direct oneself towards something one stays cognizant of the entire time for it to count as action?[228] All of

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[222] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98, emphasis original.
[223] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98.
[224] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98.
[225] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 98-99.
[226] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 99.
[227] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 100-101, emphasis added.
[228] This, in particular, is a point which will be discussed in §2.8 building in part on MacIntyre's work on determinism and free will, and the role of theories of the background in human life.

which connect in some way to questions of distinction between *being* and *becoming* which have been argued over by many influenced by Heidegger, Deleuze, and others.

At first glance, it may seem that MacIntyre doesn't focus much on the questions of being and becoming common in the works of such theorists. Despite this, there is an interesting aspect which can be touched upon here in the 'living out' of the social narratives which MacIntyre describes surrounding the virtues, which represent the 'living teloi' for one's life in the context of a given tradition or practice. Indeed, given that a virtue is only lived out through the action of its bearer,[229] it might be fair to say that MacIntyre accounts human action with *being*. However, noting his position in relation to the teleology of human life, the impossibility of ever reaching a 'final' end, and the *ongoing* narrative unity of human life,[230] it might also seem appropriate to say that his account is one of *becoming*. Christopher Lutz notes that human action is inherently teleological in MacIntyre's account, and that "every human act worthy of the name is pursued for an end, and sound practical rules are nothing but wise counsels, directing the complex web of human actions toward the common good."[231] This entails something important about the position of habit, for "when the common good is no longer understood, the rules survive only as social habits, as material survivals of a culture that is formally lost."[232] Here Lutz distinguishes in MacIntyre a difference between 'human action proper' and 'habit,' namely that any act, the reason for which one cannot properly give an account, *ceases to be action in its proper human sense*.[233] Habit is merely a more complex, socially engrained, form of a 'nervous tick,' which is aimed towards nothing and cannot be rationalized by its actor. This is *not* to say that habit and rational action *cannot* be coordinated, as in the example of a trained soldier who unconsciously proceeds from one level of engagement to the next when in a particular environment – a process which has been consciously trained into them. The soldier might *not* have to think about the rational aspect of their habit *during* an engagement but *could* explain *why* they proceed from one level of engagement to

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[229] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191, emphasis original. "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods." See also 198, "although the virtues are just those qualities which tend to lead to the achievement of a certain class of goods, nonetheless unless we practice them irrespective of whether in any particular set of contingent circumstances they will produce those goods or not, we cannot posses them at all. We cannot be genuinely courageous or truthful and be so only on occasion."
[230] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-25.
[231] Christopher Stephen Lutz, "From Voluntarist Nominalism to Rationalism to Chaos," 97.
[232] Lutz, "From Voluntarist Nominalism to Rationalism to Chaos," 97.
[233] See §2.7 for a broader discussion of habit and background knowledge.

the next if asked. Rather, it is to denote the possibility of this rational framework dissolving under the pressures of time, leaving only a habit which cannot be rationalized.[234]

Elaborating on the question of understanding, MacIntyre notes that both it's existence and absence can be seen as "condition[s] of inaction," or states of 'static being.'[235] Here MacIntyre differs from the Platonic belief that knowing, at a certain level, *is* doing.[236] This Aristotelian concern with practical philosophy existed within MacIntyre before his explicit turn away from Marx, and can be seen in the concern he lists with how contemporary human sciences such as psychology and sociology take different lanes but often end in the same place around questions of large-scale agency. Humans can either discern the laws which govern social development, or they cannot. They can lay claim to such laws, and in so doing "admit they have discovered themselves not to be agents, but victims, part of a social process which occurs independently of human mind," or they cannot discern such laws, and are thus "necessarily helpless, for they have no instruments of change in their hands."[237] In either case humans are presented as being non-agentive by the human sciences.[238] While MacIntyre notes that sociology leaves room for small-scale adaptation and agency,[239] a point he notes in his later engagement with Goffman is that that small-scale level agency is necessarily trapped without a history,[240] resulting in the apparent inevitable end of goods *entirely* relative to one's *immediate* role.[241]

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[234] This phenomenon often results in taking on the form of ideology in various cases at a social-historical level. For a brief engagement with the question of ideology, see Alasdair MacIntyre, "The End of Ideology and the End of the End of Ideology," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 3-11; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Psychoanalysis: The Future of an Illusion?," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 27-37; Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Not to Write About Lenin," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 43-47; Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Not to Write About Stalin," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 48-51; MacIntyre, "Marxism of the Will," 70-75.
[235] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 156.
[236] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, (trans.) P. Christopher Smith, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 99; Plato, "Gorgias," 460b.
[237] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 156.
[238] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 156.
[239] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 156.
[240] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 207-8, 221. MacIntyre argues that each of our "shorter-term intentions is, and can only be made, intelligible by reference to some longer-term intentions; and the characterization of the behavior in terms of the longer-term intentions can only be correct if some of the characterizations in terms of shorter-term intentions are also correct." (207-8). Any small-scale account is necessarily lost if not related to larger-scale, and vice versa.
[241] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 115-17.

Human action and agency for MacIntyre is a place where we can see his rejection of Heidegger come through.[242] The static nature of Heideggerian *Dasein* philosophy for MacIntyre traps one in a world that doesn't exist: a world one can either simply 'be' in, or where one can achieve in some final or absolute sense a conclusion. In *this* sense, MacIntyre is more like Deleuze – despite his rejection of Deleuze in almost every other manner.[243] For MacIntyre, human action is of central concern because his ontology, an ontology of practical philosophy, is one of *becoming*, of striving forward not just in the privacy of one's own life, but in the wider epistemological, ethical, social and historical traditions one exists in. Interestingly, this also builds upon MacIntyre's earlier Marxist engagements with the question of freedom, where he posited the essentiality of agency, claiming that '[t]o say that men are free is to say that they are able to make their desires, intentions and choices *effective*.'"[244] Noting immediately afterwards that this is too abstract a point to end at, MacIntyre argues that one must recognize the role of social institutions and communities in constraining, enabling, and (mis)directing human actions and understandings of freedom, helping to overcome the false binary of 'individual vs. collective.'[245] It is this concern for the social embeddedness of human action, agency, and the possibility for freedom, that has evolved into his continuous engagement with questions of practical philosophy.

2.5 Practical Philosophy and 'Plain Persons'

Having argued that "the individual has no effective human existence outside the sum total of his social relations *and* that the collective has no existence apart from the concrete individuals which compose it,"[246] and that "the moral and political life must be … a life of practical enquiry,"[247] MacIntyre expands his focus on the realm of 'the practical' by connecting it not merely with ethics and politics, but to broader sociologically grounded questions of rationality and philosophy. This was not a move developed late in life, but rather an area of concern for MacIntyre throughout his career, which he identifies when stating that "[b]y 1953 I had acquired not only from my Marxist teachers … but also from the writings of R.G. Collingwood, a conception of philosophy as *a form*

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[242] MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 265.
[243] MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 263; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 206-8, 210, 212, 214.
[244] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 124, emphasis added.
[245] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 124-33.
[246] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 128-29.
[247] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 140.

of social practice embedded in and reflective upon other forms of social practice."[248] Despite this theme of practical consideration following MacIntyre from his early Marxist days onwards, in 1953 he had yet to understand that philosophy – by his account – needs to be conceived as having at least four areas of consideration for such questions of practice:

> There is first of all that which has to be learned empirically: the rules and standards, concepts, judgments, and modes of argumentative justification, actually embodied in or presupposed by the modes of activity which constitute the life of the social order in which one is participating. Secondly, there are the ways of understanding or misunderstanding those activities and the relevant rules … Thirdly, there is the relationship between these two in respect of how far the second is an adequate, and how far an inadequate and distorting representation of the first. And Finally there is that of which a philosophy must given an account, if she or he is to vindicate the claim to have been able to transcend whatever limitations may have been imposed by her or his historical and social circumstances, at least to a sufficient extent to represent truly the first three and so to show not just how things appear to be from this or that historical and social point of view, but how things are.[249]

Embedded in philosophy as MacIntyre conceives it is thus not only sociological and historical considerations, but an understanding of philosophy as a practice, as an engaged and engaging process with its own history, rules, concepts, modes of argumentative justification, etc., by which and through which individuals can join in the process of moving from situated knowledge to knowledge which stretches beyond one's situation. In this manner, for MacIntyre philosophy "includes, but also extends a good deal beyond, what is taken to be philosophy on a conventional academic view of the discipline."[250] In this sense, philosophy not only includes rational engagement, critique, and justification of "such familiar and central philosophical topics as perception and identity, essence and existence, the nature of goods,"[251] etc., but also – a theme picked up from Marx and Collingwood by MacIntyre – it ought to recognize that

> the discovery of such theses was valuable not only for its own sake, but also was needed to serve the further purpose of enabling us to understand about particular forms of social life what it is that, in some cases, enables those who participate in them to understand their own activities, so that the goods which they pursue are genuine goods, and in others, generates systematic types of misunderstanding.[252]

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[248] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xvi, emphasis added.
[249] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xvii.
[250] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xvii.
[251] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xvii.
[252] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xvii-xviii.

This conceptualizing of philosophy as both an end-in-itself, and a means to the more specific ends of a good life – with all the oft-ignored pragmatic considerations this entails – has followed MacIntyre from his Marxist days until the present.

While articulating this position throughout his career, MacIntyre builds upon his rejection of a Platonic position by critiquing the failure of the Left Hegelians in their approach to achieving social change through intellectualism,[253] as well as the failure in turn of Marx, who rejected philosophy without resolving the underlying problems in his philosophic position.[254] Possibly drawing from Weber in part,[255] MacIntyre rejected *both* the idealism of Hegel,[256] *and* fully materialist interpretations of Marx.[257] Philosophy, for MacIntyre, must be rational in *both* a theoretical *and* practical sense.[258] Building on the apparent connection between virtue and human action discussed above, philosophy itself for MacIntyre must be something one not merely thinks about and perhaps talks about, but something one *does*. In a sense not dissimilar to Plato, if action is not the rational conclusion of philosophy, *it fails to be philosophy*. This has become more and more difficult in the modern day, given the compartmentalization of contemporary philosophy from politics and other realms.[259] Indeed, the siloing of expertise which Weber witnessed[260] has only gotten worse in the contemporary age. Despite this, MacIntyre posits that

> If it is in and through our social relationships that we achieve goods and recognize the authority of rules, and if that achievement and recognition requires, as it does, shared activities of criticism, in which we ask how the goods of this and that relationship can be bettered ordered so that they can become the goods of a whole human life and the goods directing communal activity, then *systematic enquiry* becomes one central thread of moral life.[261]

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[253] Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Partial Response to my Critics," In *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, (Eds.) John Horton and Susan Mendus, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994): 281.
[254] Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Partial Response to my Critics," 278-79.
[255] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 122.
[256] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 15-17; see also 19-43.
[257] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 261-62.
[258] See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Social Practice: What Holds Them Apart?" In *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 104-9, 116-17, 122; MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against some Renaissance Aristotelians," 3, 6; MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," 36-38; MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," 76; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxviii-xxx.
[259] Alasdair MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 236.
[260] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," In *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, ed. Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon, trans. Daimon Searls, (New York, NY: The New York Review of Books, 2020), 11.
[261] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 140, emphasis added.

This systematic enquiry is enacted both through dialogue and debate – both by philosophers *and* so-called 'plain persons'[262] – and through the actions lived out in our everyday lives.

Unfortunately, the opportunities for plain persons to engage in such dialogue and debate, having arguments presented and challenged, has lessened as the Enlightenment project of an enlightened public through liberal institutions and rationality has led to a capitalist world where "reason has no effective way of confronting the contingencies of power and money."[263] Because of these failures – failures, it is important to note, by the Enlightenment's own standards – there is

> no type of institutional arena in our society in which plain persons … are able to engage together in systematic reasoned debate designed to arrive at a rationally well-founded common mind … which might then be given political expression. Indeed the dominant forms of organization in contemporary social life militate against the coming into existence of this type of institutional arena. And so do the dominant modes of what passes for political discourse.[264]

While there remains "a set of small-scale academic publics within each of which rational discourse *is* carried on," this discourse is "of such a kind as to have no practical effect on the conduct of social life."[265] While policies are often enacted based in part on some of these academic debates, by and large "systematic rational discourse cannot be systematically carried on," and "decisions and policies are by and large outcomes of the distributions of power and money and not of the quality of the argument."[266] While this at first may seem to make one hopeless for the academic, and perhaps arrogantly disregarding towards the 'plain persons,' MacIntyre makes some important clarifications which shed a glimmer of hope on the concerns of practical philosophy.

Drawing from work on Aquinas, MacIntyre points to Suarez, who argues that "the ignorance of the multitude can be invincible in respect of those precepts which require sophisticated reflection and inference."[267] This would seem to be the opinion of many isolated within academia in the contemporary moment. But as advocates of public sociology would

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[262] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 185. Simply defined as individuals who are "not academic philosophers or academic political theorists."
[263] MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," 185.
[264] MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," 185.
[265] MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," 185, emphasis original.
[266] MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," 185.
[267] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 59.

demonstrate, this opinion does not envelope the entire discipline (see Chapter 7 for further discussion on this). While such plain persons might not be able to think up out of thin air the articulate and consistent arguments which philosophy aims towards, they are not incapable of articulation or consistency, or indeed rationality *qua* their plainness: "what they would need in order for their hitherto invincible ignorance to be overcome, is just that and no more than that: a sound argument or set of arguments, to whose conclusions they would then be able to give rational assent."[268] Suarez does not in his claim "assert anything which entails a denial of the capacity and authority of plain persons, as rational beings."[269] Rather,

> What he does is to clarify the Thomistic claim about that capacity. It is not that … *any* plain person whatsoever could have independently thought up, for example, the arguments of question 168 of the IIa-IIae about *histriones* and *joculatores*. Rather, all plain persons as such have the capacity for recognizing the truth of the premises for which Aquinas argues and, confronted by those arguments for the conclusions as which Aquinas arrives, plain persons have the capacity for recognizing their soundness.[270]

While this example is specific to the work of Aquinas, the argument is applicable across a broader spectrum of consideration. While philosophers, and academics more broadly, have the privilege of focusing on such central questions in a manner that (usually) pays the bills, "the natural light of understanding is afforded, in one way or another, to all plain persons."[271] Indeed, philosophers are themselves "no more than unusually reflective plain persons, able to present their reflections to others for the rational verdict of those others."[272]

Such considerations of practical philosophy and its social-embeddedness in a realm mostly made up of plain persons raises for MacIntyre a concern which parallel's his discussion of practices: the internal vs. external authority of laws. A central concern regarding laws (or 'rules' more generally) is that they

> should embody and reflect the rational consensus of the practitioners of [given] activities, and not a set of rules imposed by external authority. External authority has legitimate tasks to perform, but they are a matter of ensuring that the conditions

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[268] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," 59.
[269] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 59.
[270] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 59, emphasis original.
[271] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 59.
[272] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 59.

> in which a rational consensus of practitioners can emerge and have its own internal authority is secured.[273]

To this end, MacIntyre gives the examples of the University of Naples, founded by Frederick II as an entirely instrumental institution for his imperial purposes, and the University of Paris, the statutes of which "embodied, to a highly significant degree, a rational consensus, and the nature of the authority which they conferred was made plain in the procedures for administering and enforcing them."[274] The internal authority of the University of Paris in MacIntyre's example was legitimate not merely because of the external authority which has granted it privilege – as in the case of the University of Naples – but because it also "serves the common good of a wider community," *as well as* itself representing a community with "its own specific and particular good, the common good of the university."[275] This follows from MacIntyre's definitions of practices, given that this latter, internal good

> can be apprehended practically only by those engaged in the relevant set of practices of teaching and enquiry, and, although passions and interests were, as they always are, apt to distract and corrupt, the subsequent history of the university was marked by continuing debate and conflict over how the common good of the university is to be understood and what its relationship to the larger common good is.[276]

These internal goods, as well as debates about such internal goods, and the ways in which they relate to external goods, all in the context of social-historical traditions, places the university, and its practical impact, centrally in relation to the question of practical philosophy and plain persons.

Throughout his career, MacIntyre has engaged with the question of the good represented by (or failed to be represented by) the university. As an institution, it is easy to see the Weberian instrumentalization, bureaucratization, and the general impact of capitalism. Indeed, MacIntyre argues that, despite the fact that they often require institutions for their survival, practices must be resistant to institutions. The university represents a perfect example of this: as a community of rational inquiry, across and within particular departments, fields, and specific questions, the university represents an institution which *has the potential* to aid in the continuation of various

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[273] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 60.
[274] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 60-61.
[275] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 61.
[276] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 61.

traditions of inquiry and practices relevant to them. On the other hand, as has been evidenced both by the "perennially forgotten or ignored" question of the common good by both "governments and by university administrators,"[277] and the increasing view of the university as a business where profit margin is the highest good, it is quite easy to see how such an institution could corrupt the practices and traditions which inhabit it.

This abandonment of the question of the common good in the university – aside from empty statements of intent[278] - tends the university towards abandonment of its educational purpose. The function of law for Aquinas – and MacIntyre – is primarily to educate,

> and education is a matter of transforming the passions, so that the habits through which they receive expression in action are virtues. Such education takes place … in and through ongoing communal practices, and the recognition of natural law is a matter of how such practices are to be structured. The rationality of plain persons is to be elicited by and exhibited in their participation in communal practices, practice which requires a shared recognition of their common good as a political bond, a type of bond very different from that provided in local societies by ethnic or religious or other prejudice.[279]

In this manner, an account like Aquinas' of natural law "is as much at odds with local prejudice – as contrasted with local custom – as it is with centralized power."[280] This mean between the excesses and deficiencies of instrumentalized bureaucracies, political and economic institutions, and the ignorance bred at every level of society where beliefs are not open to rational presentation, critique, defense, and possible adjustment and/or abandonment is precisely what, for MacIntyre, the university *ought to* seek.

As a community of practice(s), the university ought to be open to debate over its common goods, rather than simply being an institution imposing external laws upon practices; laws which

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[277] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 61.
[278] See for instance the statements of one university as to their goals and proclaimed goods such as social justice and academic freedom – importantly undefined terms – (see York University, "Mission and Vision," *York University* Website, 12 June, 2024, https://www.yorku.ca/about/mission-and-vision/#:~:text=We%20promise%20excellence%20in%20research,%2C%20metropolitan%20and%20multi%2Dcultural.), compared with their actions (see York University, "FGS Council Meeting Minutes, January 11th, 2024," *York University Faculty of Graduate Studies* Website, 12 June, 2024, https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/wp-content/uploads/sites/184/2024/02/2-2024-1-15-fgs-council-minutes-january-11-for-february-1-2024r.docx).
[279] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 63.
[280] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 63.

cannot be critiqued or adjusted, or if they can, the process is so arcane as to make it effectively impossible to the average academic. Indeed, because

> it is in and through our social relationships that we achieve goods and recognize the authority of rules, and if that achievement and recognition requires, as it does, shared activities of criticism, in which we ask how the goods of this and that relationship can be better ordered, so that they can become goods of a whole human life and the goods directing communal activity, then systematic enquiry becomes one central thread of moral life.[281]

It is this integrated account of the individual (both as a moral agent and epistemic agent) in a community (made of up both moral and epistemic goods), that requires ongoing critical engagement with questions of the boundaries and directions of these goods, which MacIntyre provides, and demands of any functioning practice – whether inside or outside the university as an institution.

Philosophy serves an important role in society for MacIntyre by providing a range of traditions and practices which allow for the development, refinement, and adaptation of rational considerations across the realms of epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, aesthetics, ontology, etc. But the value in this, to the wider social-historical community to which philosoph*ers* are always already embedded, is not merely that such debates are happening in some enclosed community of practice divorced from the plain persons which make up the rest of society. Indeed, MacIntyre critiques the "competing moral idioms in which contemporary ideological claims, whether liberal or conservative, are framed" as resulting from the "fragmentation of practical and evaluative discourse,"[282] precisely the phenomenon exacerbated by the siloing of intellectual debate from both other traditions of intellectual debate, and the plain persons who make up the majority of any social space.

Philosophy by MacIntyre's practical account ought to provide the starting point for such plain persons to have access to arguments, positions, and means of critique to contribute not only to such debates, but to also more rationally direct themselves *in their actions* toward a good life. In addition to being a practice in the MacIntyrean sense elaborated in §2.2, philosophy ought also to be practical in *this* sense, that is it is *put into practice*, not just by philosophers but by plain

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[281] MacIntyre, "What Can We Learn from Kant?" 140.
[282] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvi-xxvii.

persons. And this ought *not* to represent yet another top-down imposition from the ivory tower to the 'rest of us' – the exact type of externality MacIntyre challenges above – but rather a *provision of tools* for plain persons to participate in an always ongoing dialogue about the common good through both their deployment of arguments, and their *living out of arguments* through their actions. An important addendum to this representation of MacIntyre's position regarding practical philosophy, is that while 'applicability' is a central concern of his, the contemporary theme in academia of increasing instrumentalization of degrees – for instance, the rising distinction between 'research' and 'professional' degrees, even to the doctoral level[283] – does not follow from MacIntyre's arguments. Indeed, it would in his eyes represent merely another institutional corruption of the practices in question.

This concern with the practical as a necessary outcome of, and contributing component to, philosophy is for MacIntyre carried through his entire career in various forms. One can trace it from his early self-critical Marxism, through to his later self-critical Aristotelianism, seeing throughout the goal of a philosophy where every epistemology is tied to an ethics, where every understanding entails an action, and where any failure to connect the two is a fundamental failure of the social. Indeed, it was through Aristotle that MacIntyre was able to better formulate the politics inherent to the theoretical considerations he was engaged with, something necessary for more articulate critique and overcoming of the failures of the anticapitalist politics of the past. What is required for the creation and maintenance of local communities of practice is a politics of self-defence,[284] but this is not possible so long as there is a disconnection between theory and practice. Building on his argument for the need for a reflexively critical Aristotelianism,[285] MacIntyre posits that if one were to "[d]etach any type of theorizing from the practical contexts in which it is legitimately at home, whether scientific, theological or political, and let it become a free-floating body of thought," then it will be all too easy for such theory "to be transformed into an ideology."[286] The politics which MacIntyre points towards is one based in small-scale communities with shared and overlapping social practices, which can be exemplified across history

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[283] See for example point 7 on the agenda of York University, "FGS Council Meeting Minutes, May 2nd, 2024," *York University Faculty of Graduate Studies* Website, June 12th, 2024. https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/wp-content/uploads/sites/184/2024/06/3-fgs-council-minutes-may-2-for-june-2024.docx.
[284] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvi.
[285] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxviii.
[286] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxix.

from "some kinds of ancient city and some kinds of medieval commune to some kinds of modern cooperative farming and fishing enterprises."[287] Within such local communities, "social relationships are informed by a shared allegiance to the goods internal to communal practices, so that the uses of power and wealth are subordinated to the achievement of those goods," which makes it "possible to form a life in which participants pursue their own goods rationally and critically," rather than through misdirecting ideological lenses, or through the constant struggle against the oppressive power of capital or the modern state.[288] It is largely because of this concern for the politics of such small-scale communities of practice that MacIntyre centres his ethics and epistemology on the question of the social. This Aristotelian focus on the such communities of practice is one which, while stemming from a slightly different origin point, is in keeping with his earlier Marxist arguments that freedom can only be achieved within certain kinds of social organizational forms, and it is because "capitalism emasculates freedom" that one has to "involve oneself in some organization that challenges it."[289]

The social is not *merely* an outcome of human action, or an abstract theoretical space, for MacIntyre, but rather is a cooperative phenomenon which *must be acted within to be maintained*, and which in turn allows for the possibility of epistemic and ethical achievements not possible outside the social. This is why MacIntyre's work the last half-century has been so focused on conceptualizing the role that the social – as an undertheorized historical phenomenon in philosophy – plays in the epistemic and ethical realms of everyday life. For MacIntyre, practical rationality *is* social.[290] And here we see one of the major reasons why this work was conceived, to bring MacIntyre's tying together of the social with the philosophical into sociology, which seems all too often to make the opposite mistake of the philosopher: staring at the social with no sense of who makes it up, why they do what they do, and whether they ought to do differently.

While specific elaboration on the application of MacIntyre to sociology is forthcoming in Chapter 7 and elsewhere, it is important to note briefly here that his concern with practical

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[287] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvii.
[288] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvii-xxviii.
[289] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire, and Revolution," 710. See also Alasdair MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 123-34.
[290] Alasdair MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 242-43.

philosophy, and the recognition that academics make up a community of practice, embedded within a wider social community, which ought to be engaged in an ongoing debate regarding common goods, presents both ethical and epistemological goals in MacIntyre which are of great importance to sociologists. Consideration of one's social-historical context has long been a point of reflection for – or point of ignorance for – sociologists. Often typified as 'activists with degrees'[291] – however appropriate such an understanding is, it is true that sociologists, as academics engaged with questions of the very structures which impact our capacity, both inside and outside the university, to engage with questions of the common good, are well positioned to take up MacIntyre's call for practical philosophy. Such 'practical sociology' is already a theme in the works of Burawoy, Bourdieu, and others.[292]

2.6 A Human Nature of Vulnerability and Flourishing

MacIntyre's focus on the social, and human interconnectivity, as a grounding for his historical, ethical, and epistemological accounts, requires a consideration of the 'necessary helplessness' of individuals. MacIntyre notes that while the human is certainly vulnerable – indeed vulnerability, and the dependence which stems from it, are inherent elements of one's humanity[293] – human flourishing is also not only a question of *individual* teloi, but of *social* and *natural* teloi as well.[294] As his ideas have developed, MacIntyre has focused on 'the social' as a space for the common good and the intertwining of individual and shared ends,[295] as noted above. In such claims we can see the elaboration of the dual concerns of *flourishing* and *vulnerability*. While it would be easy to put flourishing and vulnerability down on a scale and say that one end is the 'good life' and the other isn't, MacIntyre doesn't do this, noting rather that vulnerability *qua* human nature is something which *cannot be overcome*, and so should not be seen as something inherently oppositional to human flourishing. To this end, MacIntyre argues that:

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[291] Or in the words of a former Prime Minister, we ought not to 'commit sociology,' as it represents precisely the challenge to the uncritical application of institutional power which MacIntyre's practical philosophy ought to. See Meaghan Fitzpatrick, "Harper on Terrorist Arrests: Not a Time for 'Sociology'," *CBC News*, April 25th, 2013. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-on-terror-arrests-not-a-time-for-sociology-1.1413502.

[292] For elaboration of these positions and the question of public sociology, see Chapter 7, §7.1.(b); §7.2; §7.2.(c), (d) & (e); §7.3.(a) & (d).

[293] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 1-9.

[294] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 78.

[295] MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 239-43.

> the virtues of independent rational agency need for their adequate exercise to be accompanied by what I shall call the virtues of acknowledged dependence and … a failure to understand this is apt to obscure some features of rational agency. Moreover both sets of virtues are needed in order to actualize the distinctive potentialities that are specific to the human rational animal. Identifying how and why they are needed is a prerequisite for understanding their essential place in the kind of human life through which human flourishing can be achieved.[296]

For instance, one can develop a range of disabilities which change the *way* in which you can flourish, but it doesn't change the fact that you can – as a human being – flourish. MacIntyre notes that we need others to help us avoid falling victim to various disabilities, but also that when such disability *inevitably* develops in various forms – whether through age or happenstance[297] – we need others to aid us, despite any particular talents which may remain.[298] In other terms, disability ought not to be seen as some lessening of one's humanity:

> Disability is a matter of more or less, both in respect of degree of disability and in respect of the time periods in which we are disabled. And at different periods of our lives we find ourselves, often unpredictably, at very different points on that scale. When we pass from one such point to another we need others to recognize that we remain the same individuals that we were before making this or that transition.[299]

Our lives for MacIntyre represent a directedness between the transition from "dependent infancy" to "independent practical reasoners,"[300] a process which must account for disability, as well as age, along the way.

Accounting for disability, vulnerability, and dependence, MacIntyre notes that there must be at least a threefold classification of ascriptions of the good: goods-as-a-means, goods-as-ends (as in goods internal to practices), and the metaethical questioning of "what it is that makes certain goods goods … to be valued for their own sake."[301] This form of metaethical questioning is one whereby we make judgments about what is best for "individuals or groups to be or do or have not only *qua* agents engaged in this or that form of activity … or role, but also *qua* human beings. It

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[296] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 8-9.
[297] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 155. MacIntyre clearly emphasizes "the vulnerability and disability that pervade human life, in early childhood, in old age and during those periods when we are injured or physically or mentally ill, and the extent of our consequent dependence on others."
[298] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 128. MacIntyre notes that we must not let our regard for others be destroyed by things the other has no agency over such as (dis)ability.
[299] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 73-74.
[300] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 76.
[301] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 67.

is these judgments that are judgments about human flourishing."[302] At this point is should be clear that judgments about human flourishing imply and require an account of teleology which MacIntyre is bringing forth. MacIntyre makes this clear when he notes that sometimes "reference to flourishing as the human telos has to be made explicit in reasoning at the level of practice," arguing that "[n]ormally and usually it is a concept whose application is tacitly presupposed, a concept that remains in the background. But there are in certain types of situations practically relevant reasons for bringing it into the foreground, for making explicit reference to it."[303] Bringing of this into the foreground is essential for making sense of the role directedness plays in a virtuous human life which is seeking the good.

This teleological account has developed in its naturalism throughout MacIntyre's career. He notes that

> Each plant and animal species has its own specific form of flourishing. And what it is for a human being to flourish *qua* human being is analogous to what it is for a redwood to flourish *qua* redwood or an arctic wolf to flourish *qua* arctic wolf. Flourishing plants and animals normally and naturally develop through the stages of a life-cycle. What it is to flourish when young and immature is not the same as what it is to flourish in the prime of life or decline. And one kind of failure to flourish is failure to develop through these different stages as one should, so that one retains in adult life attitudes deformed by their childhood origin, so that one remains in some respect childish or adolescent in the later stages of one's life.[304]

Flourishing is in part a social phenomenon for MacIntyre, directed and lived out through social practices and interactions, but it is also partially a natural phenomenon – but a natural phenomenon not opposed to the social as some naturalist positions seem to be, given that MacIntyre argues that it is a natural aspect of humans *qua* humans to be engaged in the social.[305]

While MacIntyre takes up a somewhat naturalist teleological position, he does not take up the teleology of Aristotle's metaphysical biology, rather claiming that the "good life for man is the

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[302] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 67.
[303] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 112.
[304] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 34, emphasis original.
[305] MacIntyre argues that individuals *qua* their humanity are *necessarily socially located*. Sometimes he is discussing social practices, other times social institutions, other times specific relationships. This argument repeats itself throughout the breadth of his work, but some examples can be seen in MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 14-15, 95, 99-118; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 25-30, 216-20, 224-26; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvii-xxviii; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 23, 72-73, 116-17.

life spend in seeking for the good life for man,"[306] arguing that the there is *no final telos which is achievable in life*, rather that *the direction one aims* is of more import. This implies a form of historicism not only for the individual's goods, but for the goods of society, wherein the history being played out

> [c]an never be brought to completion. The possibility has always to be left open that in any particular field … some new challenge to the established best theory so far will appear and will displace it. Hence this kind of historicism, unlike Hegel's, involves a form of fallibilism; it is a kind of historicism which excludes all claims to absolute knowledge.[307]

MacIntyre has maintained this position of "*the best theory so far*"[308] up to his more recent work, positing that to "understand the directedness of … lives is to recognize that they all remain incomplete. Their directedness points beyond the particular goods that were their goals,"[309] and how

> To live well is to act so as to move toward achieving the best goods of which one is capable and so as to become the kind of agent capable of achieving those goods. But there is no particular finite good the achievement of which perfects and completes one's life. There is always something else and something more to be attained, whatever one's attainments. The perfection and completion of a life consists in an agent's having persisted in moving toward and beyond the best goods of which she or he knows. So there is presupposed some further good, an object of desire beyond all particular and finite goods.[310]

This whole process of directedness, much like our vulnerable human state – MacIntyre argues – requires others in the social world around us to become sensical.[311] The virtues which make up our lives are thus in essence tools for the reflection on, and achievement of practical changes toward, the goods we are directing our lives towards, and our understanding of why they are justifiable.[312]

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[306] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 219.
[307] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 270.
[308] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 277, emphasis original.
[309] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 314. See also MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 37, "A teleologically structured life is one that can be completed or that can fail to achieve completion and in which the directedness of that life is a movement, even if often a frustrated or otherwise unsuccessful movement, towards that completion. … to have completed one's life well is to be able to say truly and truthfully about one's activities that they have become an expression, even if a less than perfect expression, of one's care for what is more worth caring for, for what is most choiceworthy."
[310] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315.
[311] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 313.
[312] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 217-18; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-25.

Moral and political philosophy ought, by MacIntyre's reading of Aristotle, to "make explicit the nature of our directedness towards our ends and the functions of various capacities and excellences in achieving them," and in so doing "provide us both as agents and as educators of agents with standards of justificatory argument."[313] In a more general sense as well, the interaction between theory and practice is one which implies the uncovering of directedness in one's life:

> We begin by discovering a directedness in our particular actions and in our particular deliberations, so that we find ourselves inclined, first by nature, then by habituation acquired through education by others, to move toward certain types of goal, ordered and understood in certain specific ways. A good deal therefore turns on how we are educated into good or bad habits, including the habit of recognizing what it is that has been inadequate in our education so far and finding resources to correct such inadequacy. … Disagreement therefore has a positive function in the moral life, that of stimulating us to reflect upon the sources of our immediate practical disagreements.[314]

Because of this understanding of human flourishing as in-part a directedness towards the teloi of various human goods, and the necessary self-awareness and reflectiveness – brought about by both one's rational virtues *and* one's social connections – we see in MacIntyre an account of flourishing where one does not 'cease to flourish' as one gets older, rather what 'flourishing' looks like in this particular case simply changes in its specifics. MacIntyre makes it clear that human beings are dependent *throughout our entire life*, physically as children and the elderly, but also throughout the strongest physical parts of our life, as independent reasoning always *requires others* to develop and maintain.[315] This position offers MacIntyre the flexibility of not getting caught in the trap of absolutist naturalisms which can result in ableist positions. Rather it allows for an account of human nature which is broad enough to both allow for different kinds of vulnerability and flourishing – culturally, physically, and across history – while still allowing for an account which is not merely trapped in description, as any practical philosophy must give an account of an ethics – *what* and *why* one ought to pursue *this* or *that*.

This realization of the directedness of one's life – whether brought about by individual reflection, or the forced reflection caused by disagreements with others – is not only a space which

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[313] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.
[314] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75.
[315] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 63-77.

cements the teleology of human flourishing, but is a space which ties the practical and the theoretical together, pointing towards MacIntyre's wide ranging argument over practical philosophy:

> The practical need to resolve our deliberative disagreements compels us to turn to questions of a theoretical kind, but those questions, although theoretical, now also have for us a practical import. So long as our shared deliberations proceed towards agreed conclusions with only incidental and resolvable disagreements, for so long practice can remain innocent of theory. But when disagreements turn out to be systematic and irresolvable in the context of immediate deliberation then the identification of their character, let alone any attempt to resolve them, has to involve a resort to theoretical enquiry.[316]

From this we can see how various stages of MacIntyre's wide-ranging theories – many discussed above – necessarily intertwine: his teleological account of human good and human flourishing which allows space for different forms of each,[317] the necessary practical consideration of his philosophy, and the larger, more abstract theorizing necessary to make sense of the ends towards which we are aimed – often accounted in the historical context of a given tradition of inquiry.

MacIntyre's claims made about human vulnerability and flourishing are, essentially, claims about human nature. While the thought of '*a* human nature' justifiably raises suspicions in the eyes of sociologists, MacIntyre's account of human nature is broad enough, and sociological enough,[318] to avoid the determinism of many naturalist accounts. Indeed, it is an absence of an account of human nature which MacIntyre argues is a contributing factor in the fragmentation of academic disciplines:

> There is lacking any conception of the human as such, in terms of which relations between history and literature and philosophy might be established. So, to do a course in one of these subjects is usually like going round a museum; exhibits are there neatly labelled and you the spectator stand outside the case. But you can think of any connection between them and you only by imagining yourself dead and stuffed under the glass. For the alternative of seeing the exhibits as living, living as

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[316] MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," 76.
[317] MacIntyre, for instance, challenges the absolute distinction Aristotle makes between *arete* and *techne*, connecting the two through his concept of practice (despite a distinction between the two remaining), something Hinchliffe notes and agrees with. See Geoffrey Hinchliffe, "Work and Human Flourishing," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36, no. 5, (2004): 535-43.
[318] For instance, MacIntyre argues that "man without culture is a myth. Our biological nature certainly places constraints on all cultural possibility, but man who has nothing but a biological nature is a creature of whom we know nothing." See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 161.

> you are living, has never been opened to you by the demonstration of any vital connection between yourself and them.[319]

For such a connection to be achieved MacIntyre argues that a common concept of human nature must be established, which would "have to be historical, [and] have to be a means of showing the past growing into the present."[320] Such a nature would have to be more than merely historical, but by virtue of being historical, of 'growing' towards the present (or any given telos), MacIntyre's account of human nature runs parallel to his account of human goods (discussed above) and the narrative wholeness of human selfhood (discussed below).

Such claims to human nature by MacIntyre are no different than the claims made by sociologists who describe all humans as social beings, influenced by their surroundings, etc. It is merely more articulate, and in being so, it helps cover some of the gaps present in the surface-level accounts given (or *not* given) by many contemporary sociologists. For instance, in giving an account of the intelligible order of things and how humans fit into it, MacIntyre argues humans must be understood as possessing

> like members of other species, a determinate and given nature. To what ends they are directed by that nature, to what norms they must confirm if they are to achieve those ends, what relationships between them are required by those norms, and what their natural mode and direction of development is, so that they may pass from conception and birth through education to the achievement of their flourishing, are all aspects of that determinate and given nature. In different types of social order those aspects may appear in very different cultural guises. But the recognition of a common humanity enables us to recognize the expression in varying cultural forms of a single human nature.[321]

For MacIntyre, one is "in key part constituted as who I am, and what I am by the social roles to which I find myself assigned and by the relationships within which my life is embedded."[322] He does not present this in a deterministic fashion however, recognizing that "[d]uring a lifetime, of course, individuals occupy different roles and over time both roles and relationships are to some degree transformed."[323] Regardless of the *specific* role(s) or relationship(s) which make up an

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[319] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 142-43.
[320] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 143.
[321] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of *Fides et Ratio*," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 194.
[322] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of *Fides et Ratio*," 194.
[323] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 194.

individual's social life, a human's agency would take on a very different character if we did not have such interconnected spaces to act.

The importance of such a grounding of his theory in an account of human nature is that while nothing prevents individuals from "misunderstanding themselves and their relationships," if we disregard the centrality of those relationships to an account of human nature we end up in the 'rootless cosmopolitanism' which has been brought about in large part by the assumption that the liberal subject represents the end of debate on the subject of subjectivity.[324] The assumption that disregarding the 'givenness and determinateness' of one's relationships is a step towards freeing the rational subject is problematic. MacIntyre gives one example of the consequence of such assumptions, noting how "'Politics' has become the name not of a dimension of the normal life of every member of a political society, but of an optional activity engaged in only by those who at this or that particular time choose to engage in it."[325] Even conservative reactions to the apparent damage to social structures "is itself characteristically expressed in exhortations to make different and opposing set[s] of choices," demonstrating that conservative reactions to the uprooting of the human individual are themselves largely trapped within the liberal tradition.[326] Such debates between liberal and conservative interpretations of human agency take as a given the supremacy of choice,[327] which allows for a total reimaging of the self, such that

> Individuals who learn to reimagine themselves in this way … are prevented from understanding themselves as having an ultimate end, a final good to which they are directed by their essential nature. For their way of imagining themselves is incompatible with there being a good towards which they might be directed prior to and independently of their choices and incompatible with their having an essential nature defined by that good as its end.[328]

Such reimaginings of the human self as ungrounded in human nature represent not merely a point of confusion whereby it becomes more difficult to compare one's experiences with those of others, it also may "inhibit the asking of those questions and the systematic pursuit of answers to those questions that are directed towards the achievement of understanding."[329] Indeed, the asking of

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[324] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 388.
[325] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 195.
[326] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 195.
[327] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 195-96.
[328] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 196.
[329] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 196.

such questions presupposes ends towards which we are directed, and "a conception of that life as a quest for understanding of oneself and one's place in the order of things."[330] This contemporary conception of the self is precisely what MacIntyre challenges when putting forward the claim that, while based in an account of human nature, the human self is flexible insofar as it represents a historical, reflexive narrative, the boundaries of which are frequently in flux.

2.7 Narrative Selfhood

Many within the social sciences have centred the question of 'the self' or 'selfhood' in their accounts of the human individual and how they reflect or interact with others – and indeed, how they are capable of action at all. Some accounts take a more psychological turn, attempting to 'local' the self somewhere in the physical human brain,[331] others a more sociological account, aiming to 'externalize' the aspects of our self.[332] Most accounts fall somewhere in the middle, attempting to recognize the individual as contextually located in a historical and linguistic community within which – and/or *with which* – they interact.[333] The role of such concepts as 'the unconscious,' 'the ego,' 'the id,' 'the superego,' the 'personal' and 'collective' extra-conscious psyche, and various other terms often leaves one floundering in *what* the self is, *where* the self is, and what the self *does*. Such broad considerations are beyond the current work, but it is important to recognize for our discussion going forward the general tripartite spectrum of distinction of the

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[330] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 196.

[331] Many psychologists and neurologists have picked up the ball which was largely catalyzed by Freud's 'neurological phase' (despite his later rejection of this in his move towards psychoanalysis), locating 'the self' somewhere in the brain. See for instance Francisco Muñoz, Miguel Rubianes, Laura Jiménez-Ortega, *et al.* "Spatio-Temporal Brain Dynamics of Self-Identity: An EEG Source Analysis of the Current and Past Self," *Brain Structure and Function*, 227, (2022): 2167-79; Mark Solms and Michael Saling, "On Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience: Freud's Attitude to the Localizationist Tradition," *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 67, (January, 1986): 397-416.

[332] See for instance Émile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions," *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes*, 11, (2005): 35-45; Giovanni Paoletti, "Durkheim's 'Dualism of Human Nature': Personal Identity and Social Links," *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes*, 18, (2012): 61-80; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1959); Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, (Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press, 1986).

[333] See for instance George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, (ed.) Charles W. Morris, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, (trans.) A. V. Miller, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977), 58-138; Dan Zahavi, "We in Me or Me in We? Collective Intentionality and Selfhood," *Journal of Social Ontology*, 7, no.1, (2021): 1-20; Carl Gustav Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," in *The Portable Jung*, (trans.) R. F. C. Hull, (ed.) Joseph Campbell, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976), 59-69; Carl Gustav Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," in *The Portable Jung*, (trans.) R. F. C. Hull, (ed.) Joseph Campbell, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976), 70-138; Carl Gustav Jung, "Aion: Phenomenology of the Self," in *The Portable Jung*, (trans.) R. F. C. Hull, (ed.) Joseph Campbell, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1976), 139-62.

self noted above (internal, external, and somewhere in-between).[334] Arguing that "consciousness constitutes base as much as superstructures. Or, rather, consciousness is the unity which makes the notions of base and superstructure false abstractions,"[335] MacIntyre seeks to locate his account of the self somewhere on the 'slightly more external' end of the 'in-between' of the spectrum.

I say 'slightly more external' end, as there seems to be more of a Meadian balance than a Goffmanian dive towards the social in MacIntyre. But despite his critiques of Goffman[336] it is clear that MacIntyre recognized the importance of developing an account of selfhood in building up his overall framework. His account largely evolved out of his engagement with both psychology and sociology. He for instance wrote one of his earliest works focused on Freud, *The Unconscious*, where his motive was to "to extend the notion of intentional language and the idea of description to account for another class of action explanations thought of be causal, those involving the mechanisms of Freudian theory,"[337] and in so doing he cemented the need for an agentive self covering a range of *both* conscious *and* unconscious realms. MacIntyre's sociological influences can be seen throughout his work from Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Goffman, and the desire to develop a "middle way – a way to connect morality tightly enough to history, sociology, psychology, and other domains to preclude it from being a matter of mere preference or choice, but not so tightly that what ought to be becomes simply what is guaranteed to be."[338] This is clear in MacIntyre's claim that every moral philosophy presupposes – and indeed requires – a sociology,[339] and is demonstrated in the identification of the theoretical and practical mistake of regarding the individual as distinct and apart from their social and institutional life.[340]

Selfhood for MacIntyre is necessarily part of this 'middle way' account, for one must be agentive to engage in human action, but one cannot be atomized into the type of individualism which typifies modern capitalist (and many psychological) ideologies. Likewise, one must be aware of the impact the social has upon us – as noted in his work on traditions and practices – but

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[334] For a broader account of the range of 'selves' across and between these positions, see Georg Northoff, "Brain and Self – A Neurophilosophical Account," *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 7, no. 28, (2013): 1-12.
[335] MacIntyre, "C. Wright Mills," 244-45.
[336] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-5.
[337] Turner, "MacIntyre and the Philosophy of the Social Sciences," 72.
[338] Murphy, "Introduction," 6.
[339] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 23, 72-73, 116-17; Solomon, "MacIntyre and Contemporary Moral Philosophy," 132.
[340] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 283-84.

without become deterministic and anti-agentive. Contra Goffman,[341] although influenced by him,[342] MacIntyre conceptualizes the self as narrative.[343] This is necessary he argues to make intelligible *who* we are, and *where* were are, in history – both epistemologically and ethically:

> Consider [an] example of a set of compatibly correct answers to the question 'What is he doing?' 'Writing a sentence'; 'Finishing his book'; 'Contributing to the debate on the theory of action'; 'Trying to get tenure'. Here the intentions can be ordered in terms of the stretch of time to which reference is made. Each of the shorter-term intentions is, and can only be made, intelligible by reference to some longer-term intentions; and the characterization of the behavior in terms of the longer-term intentions can only be correct if some of the characterizations in terms of shorter-term intentions are also correct. Hence the behavior is only characterized adequately when we know what the longer and longest-term intentions invoked are and how the shorter-term intentions are related to the longer. … we are involved in writing a narrative history.[344]

This narrative history is necessary for epistemological self-awareness as well as awareness of one's temporal relation to the world around them.[345] This narrative history is also necessary for one's moral self-awareness, and awareness of one's relationship to the world around them; MacIntyre's accounts of virtues and practices as they relate to questions of human good requires narratives to make sense of what goods we aim toward, and how we understand our movement towards or away from them through the practice of various virtues, or the falling into various vices.

More specifically, MacIntyre's account of selfhood challenges the problem which he sees as stemming from Goffmanian accounts of the self, that of *compartmentalization*. While it is important to recognize the social roles – and the norms attached to them – which make up everyday life, there is an important distinction which MacIntyre makes between the individual *qua* moral agent, and individual *qua* occupant of a given role:

> [I]ndividuals as they move between spheres of activity, exchanging one role for another and one set of standards for their practical reasoning for another, become to some important extent dissolved into their various roles, playing one part in the life of the family, quite another in the workplace, yet a third as a member of a sports

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[341] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-5.
[342] See, for instance, MacIntyre's use of the concept of 'setting,' as well as 'role.' MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206-8.
[343] Despite the fact that 'narrative' has become a popular term among sociologists of all stripes MacIntyre was actually one of the first academics in the English-speaking world to center the term in his work. See Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 281.
[344] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 207-8.
[345] Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 395-96.

> club, and a fourth as a military reservist. Within each sphere such individuals conform to the requirements imposed on their role within that sphere and there is no milieu available to them in which they are able, together with others, to step back from those roles and those requirements and to scrutinize themselves and the structure of their society from some external standpoint with any practical effort.[346]

This process is what MacIntyre calls the 'insulation' of one set of standards or norms and another.[347] While he agrees with the commonly held account that human beings have the capacity to transcend social-historical evaluative and normative standards,[348] MacIntyre identifies that "the effects of insulation are reinforced by the absence from everyday life of milieus in the home, the workplace, and elsewhere in which such agents might engage in extended critical reflection with others"[349] over how, for example, ethics of action might demand one challenge the standards of a given role.

This concern over the 1:1 equation of selfhood with roleplaying is part of the reason why MacIntyre continually returns to the idea of self as a narrative, embedded in history, ongoing, reflective, and necessarily *greater* than the sum of the roles it plays. Indeed, a Goffmanian self runs the risk of becoming what MacIntyre calls a 'divided self.' Such a self

> has to be characterized negatively, by what is lacks. It is not only without any standpoint from which it can pass critical judgment on the standards governing its various roles, but it must also lack those virtues of integrity and constancy that are prerequisites for exercising the powers of moral agency.[350]

Such a self "cannot have *integrity*, just because its allegiance to this or that set of standards is always temporary and context-bound," and "cannot have the *constancy* that is expressed in an unwavering directedness, since it recurrently changes direction, as it moves from space to space."[351] Indeed, such a self will have a hollow conception of the virtues, where a given virtue "will generally be one of excellence in role performance rather than of excellence as a human being and hence what is judged excellent in one role-governed context may be very different from

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[346] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 197.
[347] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 199.
[348] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 189. See also his historical accounts of traditions in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*
[349] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 199.
[350] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200.
[351] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200, emphases added.

and at times incompatible with what is judged excellent in others."[352] This inevitably leads not only to an alienating reproduction of division within the self, but a widening gap between the self and other individuals – problematizing communication and translation between individuals who do not fill the same role(s).

Another problem implicit in such a divided self for MacIntyre is not only the absence of the virtues of integrity and constancy, but also the *unawareness that one lacks these virtues*.[353] Being unaware in this manner,

> there is nothing about the self thus divided that is liable to generate conflict with what are taken to be the requirements of morality within the established order. So insofar as that self recognizes and aspires to confirm to what it takes to be moral requirements, within each particular sphere of activity, it will be a morality from which the elements of potential and actual conflict are missing, a diminished morality that matches the diminishing powers of agency.[354]

The self so divided is thus problematic not only from the perspective of the narrative wholeness of an individual, but also from that of the perspective of moral agency and human action. Beyond damaging the individual self, MacIntyre argues such compartmentalization is also inimical to the flourishing of local human communities.[355] This is demonstrated by the alienating culture of storytelling in such a compartmentalized modern society, where "[w]hat is too often missing is any conception of listening to stories and telling stories as activities of crucial importance to each of us in understanding ourselves and others, and sense of how much we need to learn first to listen and then to narrate."[356] Indeed, the culture of narration within a given social-historical period or tradition of inquiry have great moral and political importance, as they help provide the tools to shape the horizon of possible understanding for moral and political questions and understandings of the period, tradition, or individual in question.[357]

Despite the seemingly ominous shadow of Weberian hopelessness present in such critiques, of a society *determined by roles* which individuals are, compartmentalized, defined, and determined by, MacIntyre challenges this by elaborating how such a divided self is "to a significant

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[352] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200.
[353] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200.
[354] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200.
[355] MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 248-49.
[356] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237.
[357] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 236-37.

degree responsible for its own divisions."[358] To do so, he notes that no matter how divided a society is, or how dominated it is by roles disconnected from one another in terms of cross-applicable standards or norms, the self "can never be dissolved nor dissolve itself *entirely* into the distinctive roles that it plays in each compartmentalized sphere of activity."[359] Indeed, the evolution of a new 'virtue' in the form of adaptability, flexibility, or "knowing chameleon-like how to take on the color of this or that social background" when moving between roles[360] – what Goffman might have described as the 'command of idiom'[361] – helps to not only manage the transition between roles an individual makes during their life, but also to denote that despite how well this so-called virtue might frame the individual as dissolved into their roles, there remains something external to – above and beyond – any given role no matter how compartmentalized the society may seem.[362]

Such frameworks of agentive consideration which exist outside any particular role is precisely the place where such a virtue of adaptability could develop and implies agency outside of any given role. This agency is evidenced at both a meta-level, with the question of how the individual manages their transition between roles, but *also* at the level of the role, with the question of 'how' one should play out their role being a constant consideration whether implicitly or explicitly:

> the ticket-seller always faced choices that machines never confront: how to play her or his role, cheerfully or sullenly, carelessly or conscientiously, efficiently or inefficiently. And for all roles, the way in which the role is enacted presupposes not

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[358] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200.
[359] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200, emphasis original.
[360] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 200-201. Goffman notes that when given a particular task a new front we often find that there "are already several well-established fronts among which [one] must choose. Thus, when a task is given a new front we seldom find that the front it is given is itself new." See Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 27.
[361] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 73-74, emphasis added. Performance of one's self largely involves for Goffman the giving off of the right expressions with only little reference to a particular 'script:' "What does seem to be required of the individual is that he learn enough pieces of expression to be able to 'fill in' and manage, more or less, any part that he is likely to be given. The legitimate performances of everyday life are not 'acted' or 'put on' in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have. The expressions it is felt he is giving off will be especially 'inaccessible' to him. …the details of the expressions and movements used do not come from a script but from *command of an idiom*, a command that is exercised from moment to moment with little calculation or forethought." This toolkit of tacit knowledge Goffman describes seems to parallel well with the 'virtue' of flexibility MacIntyre is critically identifying in two important ways: 1) it demonstrates how easy it is for the individual to become lost in the roles they are playing and moving between through their actions being 'inaccessible' to themselves, and 2) it confirms MacIntyre's later point that such a 'virtue' not only exists outside and beyond any particular role, but it ties the individual in some manner to responsibility to the ways in which they act in, or between, roles.
[362] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 201.

> only an answer to a question posed to and by the role-player: 'How is it best for me to play this role?,' but also to such further questions: 'By what standards am I to judge what is best?' and 'Should I continue to play this role in this way?' It is the inescapability on occasion of such questions that suggests that practical reasoning that is adequate for doing what a particular role requires will itself generate reasons for acting beyond those requirements and even sometimes against those requirements.[363]

It is precisely the mental habituation of closing one's mind to these possibilities, the *active* refusals and denials, which makes one "complicit with others in bringing about its own divided states."[364] This complicity is that of "co-conspirators, engaged in a conspiracy that functions so that they can lead blamelessly compliant lives, able plausibly to plead lack of knowledge as well as lack of control over outcomes for which they might otherwise be held jointly responsible."[365]

Indeed, MacIntyre's account of selfhood centres the question of human action and responsibility, as it is the human self which is capable of action or inaction, and specifically being held accountable for intelligible actions[366] – it is the self which is capable of *intention*.[367] MacIntyre argues that we place agents' intentions "in causal and temporal order with reference to their role in his or her history; and we also place them with reference to their role in the history of the setting or settings to which they belong."[368] And by doing so, we draw intelligibility out of these intentions precisely because of an existing narrative. MacIntyre gives the example of a man waiting at a bus stop whose actions are judged as intelligible or unintelligible precisely because of the narrative (or lack thereof) present in the setting:

> I am standing waiting for a bus and the young man standing next to me suddenly says: 'The name of the common wild duck is *Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*.' There is no problem as to the meaning of the sentence he uttered: the problem is, how to answer the question, what was he doing in uttering it? Suppose he just uttered such sentences at random intervals; this would be one possible form of madness. We would render his action of utterance intelligible if one of the following turned out to be true. He has mistaken me for someone who yesterday had approached him in the library and asked: 'Do you by any chance know the Latin name of the common wild duck?' *Or* he has just come from a session with

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[363] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 201.
[364] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 201.
[365] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 202.
[366] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 186-204. This entire work is an engagement with the question of responsibility for action or lack thereof.
[367] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206-9.
[368] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 208.

> his psychotherapist who has urged him to break down his shyness by talking to strangers. 'But what shall I say?' 'Oh, anything at all.' *Or* he is a Soviet spy waiting at a prearranged rendez-vous and uttering the ill-chosen code sentence which will identify him to his contact. In each case the act of utterance becomes intelligible by finding its place in a narrative.[369]

The same, MacIntyre argues, is the true, *mutatis mutandis*, of "battles, chess games, courtships, philosophy seminars, families at the dinner table, businessmen negotiating contracts – that is, of human transactions in general."[370] That is, that narrative is an essentially human phenomenon which allows for the intelligibility of all social interactions. Narrative is "not the work of poets, dramatists and novelists reflecting upon events which had no narrative order before one was imposed by the singer or the writer; narrative form is neither disguise nor decoration."[371] Indeed, narrative is essential not merely for making sense of the external world, but of ourselves. MacIntyre points this out by arguing that "genuine and extensive self-knowledge becomes possible only in consequence of those social relationships which on occasion provide badly needed correction for our own judgments. *When adequate self-knowledge is achieved, it is always a shared achievement*."[372]

This omnipresence of narrative requires both a kind of unpredictability which MacIntyre argues for in an understanding of history as only being possible retrospectively,[373] and a kind of teleological character.[374]

> We live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other, in the light of certain conceptions of a possible shared future, a future in which certain

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[369] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 210, emphasis original.
[370] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 211.
[371] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 211. Here is one of the places MacIntyre draws on Goffman, who argues similarly, that narrative is not merely a poetic flourish, but a *necessary* and *necessarily* human activity – albeit one which is inherently social, rather then psychological, relying almost entirely upon the externality of social space and 'others' to make any sense of selfhood. See Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 2, 252-54; Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1966), 17, 83-111, 112-13, 136-38; Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 2, 21-39, 177, fn. 39, 177-96, 216-22, 232-33, 254, 338, 381, 459, 503, 508, 516, 541, 546-47, 573; Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (ed.), "Symbolic Interactionism and Dramaturgy," In *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 3rd Ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2016), 545.
[372] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 95, emphasis added.
[373] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215. See also MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84-85, for his discussion of history generally, and MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 363 for his discussion of the retrospective awareness of epistemological crises specifically. See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Version of Moral Enquiry*, 127, for his discussion of how distinguishing between what is actually good and what only appears to be good is something which can only be done in retrospect.
[374] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215. See also MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 233-36.

> possibilities beckon us forward and other repel us, some seem already foreclosed and others perhaps inevitable. There is no present which is not informed by some image of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form a *telos* – or of a variety of ends or goals – towards which we are either moving of failing to move in the present. Unpredictability and teleology therefore coexist as part of our lives; like characters in a fictional narrative we do not know what will happen next, but nonetheless our lives have a certain form which projects itself towards our future.[375]

While there are always constraints to reaching possible teloi, MacIntyre argues that within those constraints there always exist ways to move towards them.[376]

We can see then that humans are, for MacIntyre, essentially *storytelling animals* in our practices, actions, and self-awareness.[377] Self-knowledge is essential for human identity,[378] and is only possible because the narrativity of human life allows for sense-making of how an individual relates to themselves, others, and the social and historical settings they exist in. Indeed, MacIntyre makes a strong argument that self-perception – or a 'first-person reality' – is only fully possible through relating to oneself from a third-person standpoint,[379] something which necessitates a connection to the stories being told by others about oneself.

Thus, selfhood is necessarily a narrative concept for MacIntyre, one which requires other *individuals*,[380] as well as a *larger social-historical context*.[381] The narratives which make up the lives of the individuals, as well as the larger social-historical context, are themselves in turn made up of the asking for, and giving of, accounts which we all participate in.[382] The concepts of *narrative*, *intelligibility*, and *accountability* all mutually presuppose each other by MacIntyre's account.[383] And so the unity of an individual life – or a narratively functional self – consists of

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[375] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215-16, emphasis original.
[376] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.
[377] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 236-37.
[378] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 95.
[379] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 153, 157-62.
[380] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 217. "I am what I may justifiably be taken by others to be in the course of living out a story that runs from my birth to my death; I am the subject of a history that is my own and no one else's, that has its own particular meaning
[381] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218. "The other aspect of narrative selfhood is correlative: I am not only accountable, I am one who can always ask others for an account, who can put others to the question. I am part of their story, as they are a part of mine. The narrative of any one life is part of an interlocking set of narratives."
[382] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218.
[383] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218.

> [T]he unity of a narrative embodied in a single life. To ask 'What is the good for me?' is to ask how best I might live out that unity and bring it to completion. To ask 'What is the good for man?' is to ask what all answers to the former question must have in common. …the systematic asking of these two questions and the attempt to answer them in deed as well as in word … provide the moral life with its unity. The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest.[384]

This quest is necessarily social and historical, requiring a starting point to improve on – indeed we are all "born with a past," something which MacIntyre argues Goffman and Sartre problematically do not account for – creating the possibility of a detached self "that can have no history."[385] So selfhood is necessarily narrative, but what *is* it? Is it a metaphysical concept, a lived-out series of actions, or psychobiological phenomenon which can be located in this or that synapse?

MacIntyre's early work on Freud is a useful place to trace this question into the next subsection. Freud's distinction between, and arguably confusion between, 'unconscious mental activity' and 'the unconscious'[386] produces an interesting question about the *what* and the *where* of elements of the self. Many social-psychological descriptions of selfhood tie it in some way to an account of the unconscious, but for MacIntyre this raises an issue, for

> Either the unconscious is an inaccessible realm of inaccessible entities existing in its own right or it is a theoretical and unobservable entity introduced to explain and relate a number of otherwise inexplicable phenomena. If it is the first, then being a real existent it requires evidence for its existence to be credible. But ex-hypothesi it cannot be observed and so we cannot possibly have evidence of its existence. If we dismiss this alternative as too naïve … then the other alternative demands that we inquire what precise explanatory role the concept of the unconscious plays. And here I find myself at a loss.[387]

The unconscious is problematic in part because of its unfalsifiability as a 'location,' whereas 'unconscious mental activity' does not suffer from the same problem. One can scientifically identify when unconscious mental activity is taking place, but one cannot 'scientifically locate' *the* unconscious. MacIntyre points out that 'the unconscious' is "difficult to make anything of in terms of the other concepts by means of which Freud seeks to elucidate it,"[388] and despite this Freud ought not to be rejected wholesale, but rather to be "sifted

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[384] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218-19.
[385] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221.
[386] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 97.
[387] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 96-97.
[388] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 112.

in the interests of clinical experience."[389] Such 'sifting' may result in the "eradication of all talk of 'the' unconscious as an entity," and in so doing remove a source of disputation between psychotherapeutic approaches.[390] *The* unconscious, in a Freudian and broader psychoanalytic sense, is arguably an unfalsifiable element of metaphysics for MacIntyre, and so ought not to be sought in the natural sciences.[391] However, it is precisely the ways in which the social science differ from the natural sciences which makes questions which float between the scientific and the metaphysical approachable.

MacIntyre notes that physics represents the "most advanced of the sciences" and thus it tends to be the model which other sciences try to approximate, and that one day psychobiological explanations of human beings will "give us their full account, which will itself be reducible to a set of chemical and finally of physical explanations."[392] Such an account, however, insofar as humans and human society differs from all other objects of study, will be problematic:

> [W]ill such an account give us what we want? It will state all the necessary conditions of human behaviour, but it will mention nothing of the specifically human. For this we need a different kind of account, the kind of portrayal that the novelist rather than the scientist gives us. In other words to portray the specifically human as human, and not as nervous system plus muscles, or as chain molecules, or as fundamental particles, is not to explain at all. Or at least it is to explain as Proust explains or as Trotsky explains. Freud was certainly a scientist: but to remember this is to expand one's conception of science.[393]

So, while a (over)reliance on metaphysics is inappropriate for a natural scientific venture, one must recognize also the limits of natural science frameworks when it comes to making sense of the human and the social. Indeed, even in the most analytic of ventures MacIntyre notes the importance of storytelling, of narrative as a starting point for making sense of concepts beyond the immediately observable. It is from here that we can turn to the questions of 'the background,' as something which arguably can be connected with, although not overlapping, questions of both the unconscious and the self insofar as conceptions of the background seeks to describe and make

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[389] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 117.
[390] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 117.
[391] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 118.
[392] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 118.
[393] MacIntyre, *The Unconscious*, 118.

sense of how an individual carries within them aspects of the external social realm, and the ways in which this influences (although *not*, by MacIntyre's account, determines[394]) their actions.

2.8 Prereflective Backgrounds

There have been many 'theories of the background' across a range of philosophical and social scientific traditions, covering everything from Habermas' lifeworld,[395] Bourdieu's habitus,[396] Goffman's primary frameworks,[397] Polanyi's tacit knowledge,[398] and beyond. What counts as such a theory – indeed, what counts as the range of 'the background' – is rather fuzzy, but elements which can help better define the conceptual border include summing up the aspects (beliefs, concepts, traditions, etc.) of the external social world beyond an individual which can be considered things we carry 'with us,' both within and beyond a given social realm. A very MacIntyrean example would be how to make sense of the elements of a tradition which one carries with one habitually as well as rationally when interacting with another tradition.

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[394] MacIntyre, "Determinism."

[395] Jürgen. Habermas, "From Worldviews to the Lifeworld," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking II*, (trans.) Ciaran Cronin, (Oxford, UK: Polity, 2017), 3-27.; Jürgen. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, (trans.) Thomas McCarthy, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989), 400. See also Thomas McCarthy, "Translator's Introduction" in *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, (trans.) Thomas McCarthy, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), xxiii-xxviii.

[396] Pierre Bourdieu, and Loic J. D. Waquant, "Toward a Social Praxeology: The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 16-26; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randal Johnson, (London, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 71; Pierre Bourdieu, "Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randal Johnson, (London, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 162, Pierre Bourdieu, "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randal Johnson, (London, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 215-17, 223, 227-35; Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," in *The Logic of Practice*, (Trans.) Richard Nice, (Croydon, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 52-54, 61-63; Pierre Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," in *The Logic of Practice*, (Trans.) Richard Nice, (Croydon, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 67; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (Trans.) Richard Nice, (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2010), 166-68. See also John B. Thompson, "Editor's Introduction," in *Language & Symbolic Power*, (ed.) John B. Thompson, (trans.) Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 12-18.

[397] Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 21-24, 25-27, 81, 188-89. See also his discussions around the question of tacit knowledge, routine, and interaction, Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 73-74, 184; Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 250, 364.

[398] Michael Polanyi, "Tacit Knowing," in *The Tacit Dimension*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3-25. See also the work preceding and following Polanyi's work in Gilbert Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That: The Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 46 (1945-1946): 1-16, and Marian Adolf and Nico Stehr, "Forms of Knowledge," in *Knowledge*, (Croydon, UK: Routledge, 2014), 108-113.

Many of the theorists mentioned above have touched on this area in one way or another. Likewise, I argue, MacIntyre's concept of 'prereflective backgrounds'[399] has sought to tackle the shared problematic of that space beyond our view, not because it is beyond the horizon, but because it is beneath our feet. While it would be a work in itself to give a full account of this area of study, it is fair to say that it is impactful upon any social theory, whether it be descriptive or prescriptive. I will draw upon two major examples (Bourdieu's *habitus* and Habermas' *lifeworld*) to show how MacIntyre's approach to 'the background' differs importantly from many that are commonly employed within the social sciences.[400]

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is a widely deployed and analyzed concept in the social sciences. Generally describable as a set of *dispositions* which are 'regular' without needing to be consciously coordinated by any rules. These dispositions are acquired through a process of *inculcation* over time. These dispositions are also *structured* in that they inevitably reflect in some way the social conditions in which they were acquired. These structured dispositions are also *durable*, in the sense that exposure to alien environments will not immediately dissolve them: they are dispositions we take with us as we move through life. Their durability is also in part due to the fact that they are pre-conscious, and not easy to reflect upon. These dispositions are also *generative* as they can help generate a multiplicity of practices and perspectives, and *transposable* as these practices can be developed and deployed within social circumstances alien to the initial inculcation of the habitus.[401] In this way habitus is a concept which can help explain people's actions as well as why people hold the beliefs they hold, and how we pick up elements of the social world and carry them with us and also how we deploy these internalized dispositions upon the world.

Bourdieu's concept attempts to account for both socially deterministic aspects of the world and human agency, attempting to overcome the frequent debates within the social sciences between determinism and agency through a 'reflexive' approach to sociology. For him,

> The notion of habitus accounts for the fact that social agents are neither particles of matter determined by external causes, nor little monads guided solely by internal reasons ... Social agents are the product of history, of the history of the whole social

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[399] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 309-315; Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity," 190-194.
[400] I will be drawing upon Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. For a further comparison with Habermas' *lifeworld* see Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 11-15, 31-35, 50, 53-55, 76, 110-17, 120-24.
[401] Thompson, "Editor's Introduction," 12-13.

> field and the accumulated experience of a path within the specific subfield. ... For determinism to exert itself unchecked, dispositions must be abandonned [*sic*] to their free play. This means that agents become something like "subjects" only to the extent that they consciously master the relation they entertain with their dispositions. They can deliberately let them "act" or they can on the contrary inhibit them by virtue of consciousness. ... But this work of management of one's dispositions, of habitus as the unchosen principle of all "choices," is possible only with the support of explicit clarification. Failing an analysis of such subtle determinations that work themselves out through dispositions, one becomes accessory to the unconsciousness of the action of dispositions, which is itself the accomplice of determinism.[402]

Despite his claim that habitus "is not the fate that some people read into it," being "durable but not eternal," Bourdieu accepts that "there is a probability, inscribed in the social destiny associated with definite social conditions, that experiences will confirm habitus, because most people are statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus."[403] This is an approach which was problematized by MacIntyre half a century ago when he challenged a range of determinist approaches.

In his challenging of determinism, MacIntyre noted that one of their strongest arguments might be suggestions that

> advances in learning theory, for example, might teach us that rational, intelligent behaviour was nothing more than well-drilled behaviour, of which a complete causal account could be given, only provided that that account was sufficiently complex. Given a detailed knowledge of the subject's learning history and achievements we might be able to predict … all rational behaviour.[404]

Such a claim runs into the dual problems of misdescribing rational behaviour, such as conflating the "irrational reaction of feeling and the carefully scrutinised moral appraisal" which has been blurred by emotive theory.[405]

Secondly, such deterministic positions run into the problem of being unfalsifiable and unable to be verified, as

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[402] Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 136-37, emphasis in original.
[403] Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 133.
[404] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 39.
[405] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 39.

> no test will be available to decide whether I act as I do because it is the rational way to act or because it is the way in which my deeds are causally determined. For on either supposition I will do the same things. To try and include my reasonableness in a story about causal factors is to try and produce a story about my behaviour sufficiently comprehensive to include everything.[406]

Thus leading to unfalsifiability - something MacIntyre has been eager to avoid throughout his career.[407]

This 'rational behaviour' he describes is worth laying out more clearly as a starting point to compare with the broader concept of 'prereflective backgrounds.' Behaviour is rational by MacIntyre's account if and only if "it can be influenced, or inhibited by the adducing of some logically relevant consideration."[408] This does not preclude impulsive actions, which can be rational given that there "may in fact be no time to adduce any considerations at all, but we can in principle distinguish the man who would leap [into water to save a drowning man] … from the man who would be stopped by the information that what was in the water was a log and not a man."[409] Likewise, behaviour can be reflective without being necessarily rational, for "a man may spend a great deal of time thinking about what he should do, and yet refuse to entertain a great many logically relevant considerations."[410] This leads to a crucial aspect of the definition:

> Rational behaviour is defined with reference *to the possibility of altering it*. A man who is behaving rationally will alter his behaviour if, and only if, logically relevant considerations are adduced. Thus in principle we can always verify whether or not a man is behaving rationally. … Thus to show that behaviour is rational is enough to show that it is not causally determined in the sense of being the effect of a set of sufficient conditions operating independently of the agent's deliberation or possibility of deliberation. So the discoveries of the physiologist and psychologist may indefinitely increase our knowledge of why men behave irrationally *but they could never show that rational behaviour in this sense was causally determined*.[411]

So MacIntyre is defining rational behaviour as free behaviour, and distinguishing it from determinism, and in doing so he is not trapping his definition in the paradox that "a free act is never a foolish act," as "[t]o say that a man's behaviour is open to alteration by logically relevant

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[406] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 40.
[407] See Chapter 7 for further discussion on MacIntyrean critiques of Bourdieu, including his concept of habitus in §7.2.(f), as well as the centrality of falsifiability to MacIntyre's account of social theory in §7.3.(b) & §7.3.(d).
[408] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 34.
[409] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 34-35.
[410] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 35.
[411] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 35, emphasis added.

considerations is not to say that he alters his behaviour in actual fact,"[412] something we have all experienced personally and vicariously through others.

Just because behaviour *can* be rational doesn't mean it *is* rational, *qua* behaviour, and just because behaviour *can* be predicted *to a certain extent*, does *not* mean we exist in a deterministic world. Individuals can pursue rational behaviour with reference to principles which involve "some degree of consistency in acting" which can lead to a level of predictability of rational behaviour, and "[t]his predictability has nothing to do with causal determination."[413] MacIntyre is thus arguing that humans are rational agents, and it is indeed in part their rational agency which allows them to *direct themselves* with consistency and thus become predictable to an extent. However, beyond this there is a prereflective background which MacIntyre argues for that acts as a liminal space between conscious rationality and unconscious habit, connecting the two and allowing for *both* the *rational agency* and the *historical and social contextualization* which MacIntyre argues for.

Drawing on another common sociological theory of the background, Habermas' theory of lifeworld might seek to overcome some of the problematics of Bourdieu's theory of habitus. For Habermas, the lifeworld represents the "prereflective form of taken-for-granted background assumptions and naively mastered skills,"[414] which represents a realm of tacit knowledge which "*does not stand at our disposition*, inasmuch as we cannot make it conscious and place it in doubt as we please."[415] Drawing on Wittgenstein's comments on the unknownability of one's own worldview,[416] Schutz's thoughts on the taken-for-grantedness of such a background,[417] and Husserl's metaphor of a 'horizon' which "shifts according to one's position and that can expand and shrink as one moves,"[418] Habermas synthesizes a conceptual background to human action which importantly remains in the background. His conception of lifeworld is one which is always present for participants in communication, but "*only* in such a way that it forms the background for the actual scene."[419] In this manner, the lifeworld is

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[412] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 36.
[413] MacIntyre, "Determinism," 37.
[414] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One*, 335.
[415] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One*, 336, emphasis original.
[416] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One*, 336.
[417] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One*, 337.
[418] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 123.
[419] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 124, emphasis added.

> not even 'known,' in any strict sense, if this entails that is can be justified and contested. Only the limited segments of the lifeworld brought into the horizon of a situation constitute a thematizable context of action oriented to mutual understanding; only they appear under the category of *knowledge*.[420]

The lifeworld as a whole thus represents a "reservoir of taken-for-granteds, or unshakeable convictions,"[421] which can only be 'knowable' if brought into human awareness through communicative actions in a piecemeal fashion. Elsewhere Habermas notes that elements of the lifeworld which are brought into the fore are only able to be accessed in this manner if they have been corrupted or damaged in some manner,[422] in other words, the lifeworld *as a whole* is inaccessible, it "*always remains in the background*,"[423] and so doesn't fall under the category of an object of knowledge, and the aspects of the lifeworld which *do* become accessible are *only* accessible insofar as they are *no longer functioning elements of the lifeworld*.

Further to this, Habermas argues that we can never go beyond our social-historical situations into some kind of void, rather we always continue into another "now actualized, yet preinterpreted domain of what is culturally taken for granted."[424] He follows this by arguing that

> In everyday communicative practice there are no completely unfamiliar situations. Every new situation appears in a lifeworld composed of a cultural stock of knowledge that is 'always already' familiar. Communicative actors can no more take up an extramundane position in relation to their lifeworld than they can in relation to language as the medium for the processes of reaching understanding through which their lifeworld maintains itself. In drawing upon a cultural tradition, they also continue it.[425]

While one certainly must concede Habermas' point that one cannot take up an extramundane position in relation to language, or one's lifeworld, this does not mean that one cannot recognize one's position before proceeding into rational engagement with questions relating to language or lifeworld. Indeed, the entire field of linguistics, along with linguistic anthropology and much philosophy of language – including some of the theorists Habermas himself draws upon – disprove this assumption by virtue of their work. Further to this, the way Habermas embeds this everyday-

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[420] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 124, emphasis original.
[421] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 124.
[422] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 400.
[423] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 131.
[424] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 125.
[425] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 124.

ness in his descriptions of the lifeworld leads to the claim that one cannot step outside their lifeworld into some void. While one certainly will never step into a void, something MacIntyre accounts for in his theory of traditions, especially in relation to the concept of translatability, is that history is replete with examples of people doing just that: stepping outside their lifeworlds. While one cannot step outside 'lifeworld' or 'language,' arguably one can step outside – or perhaps adjacent to – one's *own* lifeworld, or *own* language.

While it is important to recognize the similarities between Habermas' lifeworld and MacIntyre's prereflective background, the value of MacIntyre's concept shines by recognizing what it can offer that Habermas' concept cannot. The fact that for Habermas "the commonality of the lifeworld … is prior to any possible disagreement and cannot become controversial in the way that intersubjectively shared knowledge can; at most it can fall apart,"[426] leaves his conceptualization open to some critiques. For instance, how can a stock of taken-for-granted knowledge be completely inaccessible, when precisely those frameworks are being theorizes and reflected upon by the theorists noted above? Indeed, the very communicative action with others Habermas focuses on provides the space and opportunity for sublation of third-person perspectives of others (the importance of which is elaborated below), which may help shed light on not only a particular taken-for-granted *object of knowledge*, but perhaps a taken-for-granted *framework of knowledge* – as evidenced historically by the various epistemological crises in traditions of inquiry. While MacIntyre's conception of prereflective backgrounds will be elaborated below, it is important for now to recognize that Habermas makes elements accessible (only insofar as they are failing or damaged), but leaves the framework unavailable, whereas MacIntyre recognizes the necessity for an often unconscious grounding in the form of such taken-for-granted stocks of knowledge, while allowing for the possibility of purposeful reflection on, and problematization of, *both* the background objects of knowledge *and* the background frameworks of knowledge.

This claim must of course be supported by elaborating on MacIntyre's concept. Prereflective backgrounds represent historically embedded, socially specific, and malleable contexts which all people always carry with themselves. It is this tacit background which influences the way we view things, the choices we make, and the way we choose to do things –

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[426] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two*, 131.

indeed, it is only from such a background that the conditioning of different virtues is possible, such as the exercise of *phronesis*. It is also a *living* background, in that our rational action can participate in its recognition by ourselves and others, and its directed development. Unlike some other theories of the background, MacIntyre argues that it is something which we can become aware of in certain circumstances, without leading to, or having as a prerequisite, its destruction. Terry Pinkard describes this concept not as an escape from normative value – something which is clear from MacIntyre's rejection of determinism and evidently problematic in some other theories of the background such as Bourdieu's habitus and Habermas' lifeworld – but rather a shared element of human life:

> [I]n living out one's life, one is oriented to taken-for-granted notions of the goods of that form of life – what we have called the "moral reality" … - that in turn structure one's practical reasoning as a kind of skill, a know-how in making one's way around that life. …we always simply "find" ourselves in a historical community for whom some things simply "are", at least from our point of view, goods.[427]

Pinkard's description focuses on the 'goods' which make up the background of a given person's social-historical life, and how these goods represent a starting 'moral reality.' This moral reality is only one part of what is accounted for by this prereflective background, as MacIntyre argues that is one of the central roles of social theory is to help make explicit what is implicit in the social world.[428]

As noted above, MacIntyre distinguished between *determining* and *agentive* factors, or what he later came to define as *purposes* – which are intentional and thus rational – and *causes* – which are unintentional and thus non-rational.[429] While the prereflective background may seem as something which cannot be intentional, and thus cannot be rational (being entirely unconscious, or perhaps preconscious),[430] MacIntyre instead conceptualizes it as something which can be *rationally engaged with*, and thus at least *potentially can be*, "purposive, in that it influences the rational choices of persons, who in turn can – through engagement with others – investigate and

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[427] Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity," 192.
[428] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 111.
[429] Turner, "MacIntyre and the Philosophy of the Social Sciences," 72.
[430] Something which would put it more on the side of Habermas' *lifeworld*.

influence [their] prereflective background[s]."[431] So the prereflective background is just that – *generally* prereflective – but it is *not* something which is *incapable of being reflected upon*.

It thus represents a concept which both historically locates an individual in a way which does not necessitate the conceptual and practical difficulties in "a conception of reason that has to claim that it starts from nowhere (as if we always had to deliberate on the principles of deliberation, ad infinitum, before we could ever reason),"[432] and develops an account of how one develops the possibility of reflection:

> Which particularities in an agent's situation are relevant to her or his decision making is a matter of which goods are at stake in that particular situation and of their relative importance in that situation. How clearly agents perceive what is at stake and how adequately they judge often depends on how far they are able to take into account not just how that situation appears to them, but also how it appears to *those others who are involved in that situation, especially those others with whom they cooperate in the achievement of common goods*. And that ability is acquired *only through deliberation with perceptive and truthful others, so that one becomes able to transcend what would otherwise be the limitations of one's own particular standpoint*.[433]

Such transcendence of the limitations of one's positionality is *not* a "supreme act of reflection" in a Cartesian sense,[434] but rather an activity which involves both *the individual who is reflecting* upon their prereflective background, and *the 'others' which make up the social-historical world around them*, allowing for the conceptualization of one's self and the pursuit of such reflection. The role of *the other*, whether in a specific, solitary sense (a friend), or a general sense (another ethnicity, nation, or tradition) is essential to the development of the capacity to recognize one's own background 'in the third person.'

This distinction which MacIntyre makes between the first-person and the third-person is essential for explaining how an individual can come to reflect upon their prereflective background. Drawing on examples from novelist D. H. Lawrence, MacIntyre argues that "it is only from a third

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[431] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 114.
[432] Terry Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity," 193-94.
[433] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 312-13, emphasis added.
[434] Thomas McCarthy, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, xxiv.

person standpoint that … the limitations of [one's] first person standpoint" can be recognized.[435] MacIntyre continues by suggesting that

> What agents need, if they are not to be the victims of deception and self-deception is … to see and understand themselves as perceptive others see and understand them. What they need is to judge and to act from a first person standpoint *informed by a kind of practical self-knowledge that can only be acquired from a third person standpoint*. Their confidence in the outcome of their own deliberative activities will be well founded only if it resembled in important respects the confidence that someone else might have in that outcome.[436]

Human agency is then necessarily grounded for MacIntyre in a self-knowledge which is only attainable through a recognition, and adoption of, the third-person standpoints of the social sphere(s) one exists in. These other individuals help create the social background which is internalized into the prereflective background of the individual. This self-knowledge is "difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve without the help of others who know [you] well as a result of having interacted with [you] over extended periods of time," but there is more to it than this.[437] An individual also requires the capacity to "know whether they are describing the alternatives between which they are choosing realistically and whether they have or will be able to acquire the abilities and the skills that they will need in each case. Here, too, they may need to consult with relevant others."[438] Such consultation raises a question of whether one is placing their faith in their relationships with others wisely or foolishly, insofar as it *allows for* (or *leads away from*) the acquisition of self-knowledge.[439]

From this MacIntyre describes three ideal-typical possibilities for one's relations with others: *first* are those who generally share a social imaginary which tends to limit the horizon of possibility for all. Even those who identify or seek to break free from this social imaginary do so in a way which is "itself conventional, limited, and unimaginative. Worse still, among their limitations is that they *do not know their limitations*."[440] *Second* is the possibility that the others

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[435] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 157.
[436] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 157, emphasis added.
[437] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 159.
[438] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 159. One can see here elements of MacIntyre's pedagogical philosophy as it relates to the need for others. See also his discussion of 'good' vs. 'bad' education, and individuals qua individuals vs. qua members of social groups, 173-75, and his note on the critical importance of how we "need to learn first to listen and then to narrate," 237.
[439] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 159.
[440] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 160, emphasis added.

with whom the agent interacts are themselves very different from each other, resulting in *too many* "alternative standards for choosing between."[441] *Lastly* is a case of others who, despite their diverse "experiences, their occupations, their hopes and expectations, their religious and irreligious views of the world,"[442] have known the agent *long enough* and *well enough* to "have a justified confidence in their reasoning and their judgments," as well as "how she appears and how her choice appears from a third person point of view."[443] This third possibility allows for an individual to correct their own self-judgments

> through extended discussion with some of these others … consider[ing] possibilities that she had not yet envisaged. Her choices remain inescapably her own, but the deliberation in which she engages are informed by third person as well as first person judgements and in making her final choice she is, in important respects, relying on and trusting in others.[444]

Such connections need not be all dialogical and positive, however, and MacIntyre notes that *how* an agent comes to reasons may in fact be "the result of her having learned from those others that she has reason to be suspicious of."[445] The influence of others need *not* always be good, but it *is* always impactful.[446]

Agency then, for MacIntyre, involves understanding ourselves as "honest, perceptive, intelligent, and as insightful others see and understand us, with the objectivity that is only possible from a third person standpoint, but a third person standpoint that we have become able to *make our own*."[447] Much like Mead in his account of the 'I' and the 'me,'[448] and the role of the generalized other,[449] subjectivity for MacIntyre requires objectivity, and this objectivity is only possible through social interaction.[450] It is this external necessity which connects agency and self-knowledge with social-historical narratives. These narratives, these traditions of storytelling, help shape the possibility for self-awareness and ethics:

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[441] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 160.
[442] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 160.
[443] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 160.
[444] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 161.
[445] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 161.
[446] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 162.
[447] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 161, emphasis added.
[448] Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, 173-78, 192-200, 209-13.
[449] Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, 154-56, see also 154, fn. 7.
[450] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 128-33.

> The young learn, or fail to learn, to imagine themselves as they were, as they are, and as they might become and the limits of their imagination set limits to their desires and to their practical reasoning. They learn to hope for the best that they can imagine, and they despair when they can imagine no good future. Because this is so, the storytelling resources of each culture are of great political and moral importance.[451]

So, youth - and adults - come to witness their lives in "comic, tragic, or even epic terms and to recognize differences between comedy and farce, tragedy and meaningless disaster, epic and romantic exaggeration masquerading as epic. So it is that they are rescued from illusion by satire, parody, and caricature."[452] Storytelling is essential for self-understanding, as well as social understanding, and while some cultural and historical spaces are better equipped for aiding in this,[453] it is often through shifting narratives that realities can be changed.

It is no accident then, MacIntyre argues, that it was Aristotle, Aquinas, and Marx who have "thrown the most light on the political and moral life" by demanding – and providing the tools for – "a retelling of the stories of our lives, the replacement of a less by a more adequate narrative."[454] In this advanced modern age, however, "the practices of storytelling [have] become such that they no longer provide resources for individuals struggling to narrate the stories of their own lives, and this is both because of what has happened to storytelling and what has happened to those lives."[455] The compartmentalization which runs rampant in advanced modernity – discussed above – prevents the necessary conscious and reflexive connection between the self and the other which allows for capacity to recognize and adopt third person standpoints into the narrative of one's own self-knowledge.[456] What is often missing in this culture of compartmentalization is "any conception of listening to stories and telling stories as *activities of crucial importance to each of us in understanding ourselves and others*,"[457] as well as "any sense of how much we need to learn *first to listen* and *then to narrate*."[458] Instead, we are encouraged to see the world through entirely first-person, and often utilitarian and instrumental, lenses – seeing the 'other' as merely a component

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[451] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 236.
[452] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237.
[453] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 236-37.
[454] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237.
[455] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237.
[456] See, for instance, Weber's discussion of rationalization, siloing of expertise, and polytheism of values. Weber, "The Scholar's Work."
[457] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237, emphasis added.
[458] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 237, emphasis added.

part of a background which exists solely to serve us, rather than other selves with other narratives. Arguably, this compartmentalization has contributed to why some theories of the background conceptualize it as entirely inaccessible.[459] Indeed, MacIntyre's emphasis on the necessity of the other for the interactive development of self-knowledge also cements the other as necessary for one's ability to reflect upon the prereflective. Without the possibility of a third-person standpoint, one simply wouldn't be able to take oneself out of the first-person and realize that there is a background which we carry prereflectively with us – nor the ways in which it is formed by out social-historical context *as well as* our own agency.

As the other is necessary for the possibility of developing the reflective capacity to draw elements of the background into the foreground, a final consideration of the prereflective background is that it is not only something which one can never be 'fully aware' of,[460] but that anything reflected upon will eventually sink back into the background should it ever cease to be the object of reflection. For example:

> A death in the family, a betrayal by a friend, a famine killing a particular crop, or a neighbour moving away. All of these things bring us face-to-face with our underlying assumptions. It is our guts sinking, our kneejerk reactions, our unspecific sadness or anger, which slowly allows us to come to consciously considering "what was it about that family member/friend/food/neighbour that I am missing?"
>
> Once aware of their previously implicit assumptions which these unsettling instances have made explicit however, the individual can only do so much to sink back into the lifeworld realm regarding their family, friends, and what have you. They will henceforth fear for future deaths in the family, be on the lookout for backstabbing friends, and perhaps even hoard their favourite confection. It is surely the case that these paranoias ease with time, but it would be hard to argue that once aware, anyone ever again becomes fully unaware.[461]

Arguably the area of the prereflective background, which was previously unconscious, may *return* to the background, but it will remain an aspect of the background one is aware of, which can potentially be recalled without needing some life happenstance to draw it out.

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[459] As an example, see Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," for a discussion of the colonization of the lifeworld and how the lifeworld is only rationally accessible insofar as it is damaged or non-functioning.
[460] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 115.
[461] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 116-17.

Such processes of purposeful reflection MacIntyre argues often take place through the rational engagement with others,[462] who play the essential role noted above in drawing one's self into a third-person level of awareness and self-knowledge:

> We ask our surviving mother several years after the death of our father "why do I still feel empty? Why do I still feel scared?" In speaking with them, we investigate our feelings not just in regards to our deceased father, but also to our assumptions about our family as a whole, and our place therein. These are more or less explicit depending on the persons engaged in communication, but they have the potential to be *incredibly* explicit given the right partner in discourse. This is not a thing which undermines the background upon which one relies for communication for MacIntyre. It simply expands our understanding and the realm which we can discuss subjects in, the 'horizon of possibility' for knowing, as Gadamer would say. If anything, it merely exposes … barely tangible fringes of knowledge, and the as-yet-unknown areas beyond these fringes, ensuring that the rational accessibility of the lifeworld doesn't not necessitate its dissolution.[463]

So, the accessibility of the prereflective background takes place in two broad ways for MacIntyre: First, elements of the prereflective background are forcibly drawn into the foreground by the happenings of the world one finds oneself in – the death of a friend, a natural disaster, etc. This *forces* some level of reflection, even if only briefly. For example, if one responds immediately through a process of denial, cutting off their engagement in reflection, in a Goffmanian fashion this forces one to reflect upon the object of denial.[464] Even in doing this, whether explicitly denying or merely attempting to forget something, one has at least temporarily become aware of the questions they are denying such that they now *know what they do not know*.[465] Returning to the

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[462] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 117.

[463] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 117, emphasis original.

[464] Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 346, emphasis added. "Involvement is a psychobiological process in which the subject becomes at least partly unaware of the direction of his feelings and his cognitive attention. … *if a particular focus is to be maintained, it cannot be maintained intendedly* (at least wholly so), since such an intention would introduce a different focus of attention, that of maintaining a particular one. Our conduct, when analyzed, must process to support the official focus of attention, *but not because we are attempting to do so.*" Following from this, while some externally forced focus of attention may eventually sink into the background through some process of explicit denial or mental side-stepping, a certain level of attention is first focused upon the phenomenon being denied or side-stepped.

[465] For a brief discussion of quadripartite division of knowledge between the things *we know we know* (conscious, rational knowledge), the things *we know we don't know* (areas of knowledge we are aware of, but the specifics of which we aren't aware of), the things *we don't know we know* (a realm important for the study of habit, disposition, prereflective backgrounds and other theories of the background), and the things *we don't know we don't know* (areas of knowledge totally unknown to us, but extant regardless), see Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 117-18, fn. 335. For elaboration on things we know we can know, see Plato, "Meno," in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenus: The Dialogues of Plato Volume 1,* (trans.) Reginald E. Allen, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 80d-e; Aristotle, "Posterior Analytics," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle,* 108-86, (ed.) Richard

importance of the third-person perspective for MacIntyre, we could also note that sometime the phenomenon which is forcibly directing or redirecting one's attention is often the opinions of, or actions of, another human being. Indeed, often it is through discussion – meaningful or otherwise – with others that we are brought to realize elements of ourselves that we were previously unaware of, and this demonstrates one of the central importances to MacIntyre for such acknowledgement of the value of engaging with third-person perspectives.

Second, through the conscious reflection, either upon the elements which previously were forced into the foreground and have since sunk back, or a purposeful reflection into one's self-knowledge – we can see a process which can lead one to new horizons of internal knowledge and the realization of dispositions or experiences one has that previously they were unaware of. This can take the form of intimate levels of dialogue between one's self and others as noted above, where the purposeful (and accidental) shifting of focus draws out elements of one's prereflective background, or it can take a more abstract form, caused by participation in inter-traditional dialogue and conflict, where such larger-scale engagements can indirectly cause one's reflection. I argue elsewhere that traditions themselves represent a more external manifestation of prereflective backgrounds,[466] but expanding on this, drawing on the above §2.1, we can see that traditions are both external to the individuals who inhabit them, and are actively made up of these individuals in a manner in keeping with MacIntyre's rejection of 'individual/collective' binaries,[467] thus representing something in-between a historical object and a lived-out expression of one's internalities. Traditions *both* represent the externalities which help forge one's prereflective backgrounds *and are themselves molded* by the individuals acting out such prereflective backgrounds. This process is *not merely deterministic* – as might be critically assessed of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field – but given MacIntyre's focus on human agency in

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McKeon, (trans.) C.D.C. Reeve, (New York, NY: The Random House Publishing Company, 2001), 184-86; Aristotle, "On The Soul," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle,* (ed.) Richard McKeon, (trans.) C.D.C. Reeve, (New York, NY: The Random House Publishing Company, 2001), 595.
For elaboration on things we know we don't know, see Jacob Klein, "Introductory Remarks," and "Doxa," in *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, (Chicago, IL: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 3-31, 205-256.
For elaboration on things we don't know we know, see Aristotle, "Posterior Analytics," 110-15.
For elaboration on things we don't know we don't know, see Plato, "Meno," 80d-e; Aristotle, "Posterior Analytics," 110-115, 184-86; Aristotle, "On the Soul," 595; Michael E. Marmura, "Avicenna on Meno's Paradox: On "Apprehending" Unknown Things Through Known Things," *Mediaeval Studies,* 71 (2009): 47-62; Klein, "Introductory Remarks," 3-31, and Klein, "Doxa." 205-256.
[466] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 120.
[467] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 129-33.

rational action, we can see that there is *always an agentive element embedded in this back-and-forth historical process.*

2.9 Moral Psychology

Such questions of selfhood and backgrounds draw one into obvious epistemological directions, but there is, undergirding all of MacIntyre's work, a *moral psychology* as well. Drawing from his Aristotelian influences, ethics "is about developing a rich, natural understanding of living well," but this "ceases to be the case when morality is reduced to [mere] rule-following."[468] MacIntyre does not seek a Kantian rationality where rules are the goal, but rather a naturalistic Aristotelian rationality, where living well is sought and achieved through understanding and action. Rules ought to exist, and be followed, but be followed because their purpose is understood. Should this not be the case, they ought to be challenged.[469] In this, MacIntyre is putting forward a form of presentist Utopianism which is tied to his moral psychology:

> This Utopianism of those who force Aristotelian questions upon the social order is a Utopianism of the present, not a Utopianism of the future. Utopianisms of the future have been and are misleading and corrupting, because they are always apt to and almost invariably do result in a sacrifice of the present to some imaginary glorious future, one to be brought about by the sacrifice of the present. But the present is what we are and have, and a refusal to sacrifice it has to be accompanied by an insistence that the range of present possibilities is always far greater than the established order is able to allow for. We need therefore to acquire a transformative political imagination, one that opens up opportunities for people to do kinds of things that they hitherto had not believed that they were capable of doing.[470]

The development of this transformative political imagination is an external element of the self which MacIntyre ties to questions of morality. The interactions between self and other, between traditions, between cultures, and the consequences of them are all *moral interactions* at the same time that they are social and epistemological. These moral interactions help cement, develop, or challenge the moral elements of the prereflective backgrounds which help shape one's narrative selfhood.

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[468] Lutz, "From Voluntarist Nominalism to Rationalism to Chaos," 95.
[469] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 126. MacIntyre critiques liberal democratic rule systems as being a means to 'self-rule,' noting that this is obvious given the "grotesquely unequal ways" in which power is distributed within liberal democratic societies. See also MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv.
[470] Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," in *Virtue and Politics*, (ed.) Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 16-17.

These moral elements of the prereflective background can be seen lived out in conscious attempts to pursue *right action*.[471] In this moral process MacIntyre makes it clear that just as with any epistemologically-aimed interaction, "right action is characteristically the outcome of deliberation with others,"[472] and that

> what those who deliberate together share, what binds them, is a common acceptance of certain norms and a recognition of certain common goods, but this always in forms that derive from and are defined in terms of the particularities of a shared cultural inheritance. So in their practical reasoning at any particular time and place, there will always be some measure of rough-and-ready agreement on how goods are to be ordered.[473]

These shared external, social-historical moral frameworks help point towards the necessary moral element of the external elements discussed above which play a role in the construction and maintenance of the prereflective backgrounds which in turn shape the individuals who carry them. All selves, all psychological framing, is for MacIntyre necessarily a moral framing by nature of the necessary social element in human life – from its more basic self-consciousness to its more complex social organization. Importantly, as Lutz notes, the ethical grounding which comes from the development of such a moral psychology can decay from knowing how to live well into a state of mere rule-following.[474] This possibility of moral degradation to the point of automatism is precisely one of the reasons why for MacIntyre, practices are not merely part of the background – as Heidegger argued. Indeed, as Knight notes, "although MacIntyre acknowledges that practices often comprise something like a Heideggerian background to fully conscious intentionality and action, he thinks that practices and practitioners benefit from explicating shared goals and standards."[475] Further to this, MacIntyre is critical of such Heideggerian background-centric theories of practice in part because it is the state and corporate institutions which made it essential for practices and their ethical and practical elements to be made explicit so not as to be corrupted.[476] This is part of the reason why MacIntyre is so firm in his arguing for a politics of self-defence – as the moral psychology which develops out of a world whose both prereflective background and

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[471] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 291-92.
[472] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 291.
[473] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 291-92.
[474] Lutz "From Voluntarist Nominalism to Rationalism to Chaos," 95.
[475] Knight, "After Tradition? Heidegger *or* MacIntyre, Aristotle *and* Marx," 43.
[476] Knight, "After Tradition? Heidegger *or* MacIntyre, Aristotle *and* Marx," 43.

explicit communities of practice are corrupted by capitalist institutions is inherently detrimental to the recognizing, let along overcoming, of the unjust nature of elements of society.

There is clearly a connection between the influence of MacIntyre's early connection with sociology, especially interactionist conceptions of selfhood, and the moral and political considerations draws from both Marx and Aristotle throughout his career in MacIntyre's moral psychology. This can be seen throughout MacIntyre's accounts noted above about the development of selfhood, the role of agency in human action, the role virtues play in our lives, etc. All development for MacIntyre is social development, and thus also moral development.

2.10 Critical Elements in MacIntyre

Having presented accounts of some of MacIntyre's central theoretical developments, so as to contextually prepare the reader for their deployment throughout the coming chapters, it is perhaps useful before moving on to briefly highlight some of the critical elements in MacIntyre which these theoretical and metatheoretical considerations allow for. These elements in MacIntyre's thought will be further explicated in some of the following chapters, but will also help ground some of the claims in the conclusion about what MacIntyre might offer sociology, and how we might respond to some of the challenges presented by such an interdisciplinary deployment.

2.10.(a) Critique of Capitalism with/against Marx and other Social Theory

Since his early Marxist days to the present, MacIntyre puts forward a range of critiques of capitalism,[477] including, but not limited to, such contradictory modern phenomena as 'business ethics,'[478] whose "teaching is a dangerous distraction from enquiry into the nature and causes of what is morally flawed in our economic institutions and activities."[479] MacIntyre's early engagement with Marx described variously above, and elaborated in Chapter 4, has been hugely

[477] Ron Beadle "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice," 236-39; MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 249-50; Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a Critic of Marxism;" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 88, no. 4, (2014), 705-24. Blackledge, "Alasdair's Contribution to Marxism;" Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre;" Blackledge, "Utopias."
[478] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Irrelevance of Ethics," in *Virtue and the Economy: Essays on Morality and Markets*, (eds.) Andrius Bielskis and Kelvin Knight (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7–21.
[479] MacIntyre, "The Irrelevance of Ethics," 8.

influential on his contemporary work. Despite this, he now rejects major elements of the Marxist political project. He does this though not for conservative reasons, as Knight argues, for he

> accepts that there is a contradiction between human nature and the nature of capitalism, between the need of capital to accumulate and the need of human beings to fulfil their potential, but he denies that Marx's proletariat has any more chance of negating capitalism's negation of human nature than does Hegel's bureaucracy. … Marx was, for MacIntyre, *not nearly radical enough* in his understanding of social conflict, of the ideological obfuscation of that conflict, and of the demoralizing effects of capitalism.[480]

While MacIntyre recognizes the all-too-common vulgar Marxist understanding of things like base and superstructure, and the economic determinism that comes with it,[481] and recognizes that Marx had a more nuanced view of the relation of ideas of the material world,[482] MacIntyre still critiques Marx*ism* (if not necessarily Marx) as politically hamstrung by the inability to move beyond a capitalist horizon of possibility. This is evidenced when he notes Marx's epistemological debt to Hegel, whose Christian and Enlightenment influences can be seen in Marx,[483] a history which was erased for many later Marxists when Engels replaced this Hegelian heritage of Marx with a 'false science' which was to influence, among other things, later Stalinist economism.[484] Another influence which shone through Marx, especially his earlier works, but has largely been buried by history, is that of Aristotle (itself in part inherited from Hegel).[485] Indeed, one of the failings of Marx (and Marxists) on MacIntyre's account is move away from the Aristotelian influence in his early thought,[486] as he claims many of his ideas would have been strengthened from a more explicit engagement with Aristotle, and indeed that some of Marx's claims are better understood through an Aristotelian framework rather than a orthodox Marxist one.[487]

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[480] Knight, "Introduction," 22, emphasis added.
[481] Eric Hobsbawm, "Karl Marx's Contribution to Historiography," *Diogenes,* 16, no. 64, (1968): 42-43.
[482] For instance, the claim that Marx did *not* have a materialist ontology, but rather one of individuals-in-relations. See MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 225.
[483] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7, 30-33.
[484] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 93-94.
[485] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 31. See also Ruth Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism: MacIntyre, Marx and the Analysis of Abstraction," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 38, no. 8, (2012): 775, 783, 787; Michael Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity: Aristotelian and Marxist," *International Critical Thought*, 9, no. 3, (2019): 467; Eugene Kamenka, (ed.), "Introduction," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.) Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), xvi.
[486] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 224-25; See also MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity,* 7, 30-33.
[487] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 226, 231.

It is a return to an Aristotelian deployment of Marx which MacIntyre argues offers to overcome, in part, Marx's undertheorization of social conflict and ideological obfuscation. Indeed, despite the seeming pragmatism of a historical materialist approach (itself, as noted, a problematic term to pin to Marx's corpus), MacIntyre critiques Marx for

> having himself been too utopian in imagining that capitalism makes available the material conditions under which such a politics will be practised in a post-revolutionary future. MacIntyre's political aspiration is no more the eschatological one of Marx than it is the institutionally progressive one of Hegel.[488]

MacIntyre seeks to deploy the critical elements of Marx while avoiding the practical pitfalls present in his political project. As much as he challenges Marx for not digging deeper into what a functioning political community might look like – problematic given Marx's claim that "an alternative to capitalism's negation of human nature is not only possible but inevitable"[489] – he likewise rejects the late Hegel's institutionalism which automatically justifies the state apparatus.

Despite moving away from a direct connection with Marx, and Marxism more broadly, MacIntyre maintains a critical Marxist bedrock and turns it around, seeking to turn a critique of the 'utopianism of Marx' into a 'utopianism of the present,'[490] which allow for "conscious resistance" and collective human action directed against the influence of capitalism.[491] Despite this, various attempts have been made to misappropriate him as a theorist for management studies and business ethics, both of which he is critical of.

Born of this critical Marxist perspective, we can see in MacIntyre a critique also of what human freedom looks like – or is assumed to look like – under capitalism. This is briefly demonstrated in his critique of the reactive, bourgeois understanding of freedom as a purely *negative phenomenon*, rather than a positive one, a critique as potent today as it was in the 50s and 60s. Taking the artist who rejects society as an archetype for this critique, MacIntyre notes that *this* sense

> of 'free' in which to be free is to reject the conventions has left its mark upon phrases as various as 'free love' and 'free verse'. But this freedom is too negative

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[488] Knight, "Introduction," 22.
[489] Knight, "Introduction," 22.
[490] Blackledge, "Utopias," 421.
[491] Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 21. See also his various examples of practices which exist and resist global capitalist control. MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 176-82.

> and destructive to be much worth praising. It is the freedom of the bohemian and the beatnik. As such, it is too much like a mere inversion of bourgeois values. Instead of the cog playing its part in the machine, the cog runs free or grinds destructively against other cogs. … In this world, too, one is a victim and a product of a system not understood.[492]

Freedom, MacIntyre argues, must include both a recognition of the denials of freedom under capitalism,[493] and the recognition that the false dichotomy between individual and collective often leads to the misunderstanding that "[t]o assert oneself at the expense of the organization in order to be free is to miss the fact that only within *some* organizational form can human freedom be embodied,"[494] and that we need other individuals to help form and overcome current organizational forms which repress freedom.[495] One must not fall into the "illusion that one can as an isolated individual escape from the moulding and the subtle enslavements of the status quo," for "[b]ehind this there lies the illusion that one can be an isolated individual," which is a possibility MacIntyre – along with almost all sociologists – rejects.[496]

This negative freedom is later demonstrated using Durkheim's concept of *anomie* as a foil, where MacIntyre notes that

> What Durkheim did not foresee was a time when the same condition of *anomie* would be assigned the status of an achievement by and a reward for a self, which had, by separating itself from the social relationships of traditions, succeeded, so it believed, in emancipating itself. This self-defined success becomes in different versions the freedom from bad faith of the Sartrian individual who rejects determinate social roles, the homelessness of Deleuze's nomadic thinker, and the presupposition of Derrida's choice between remaining 'within,' although a stranger to, the already constructed social and intellectual edifice, but only in order to deconstruct it from within, or brutally place oneself outside in a condition of rupture and discontinuity. What Durkheim saw as a social pathology is now presented wearing the masks of philosophical pretension.[497]

The impact of this negative freedom is substantial precisely because it wears the masks of philosophical pretention. If there were a collective of people who simply stepped into the void and ceased to be, it would have no impact on the concept of freedom. But it is precisely because this

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[492] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 128.
[493] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 126-28.
[494] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 129, emphasis original.
[495] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 133.
[496] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 132-33.
[497] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 368-69, emphasis original.

negative conception is repeated not only in espresso bars, but in philosophy departments and the media of 'plain persons,' that it is a challenge which must first be overcome before a healthy telos and a feasible practical philosophy can be constructed.

To aid in his elaboration in this matter, MacIntyre gives us the metaphors of 'grooves,' 'ladders,' and 'espresso bars.' *Grooves* represent the preordained and delimited aspects of society – the grooves we fall into and proceed along by default unless something is done to stop it. Grooves exist at all levels of society, and while the grooves themselves may be different (insofar as the goals and means are different), their groovy-ness remains the same.[498] *Ladders* represent the possibility of escape from a given groove, but these means of escape are essentially competitive: "[a]t least in the grooves you were *with* your fellows, on the ladders you are against them."[499] Again, these take different specific forms in different contexts, but their function is essentially the same. Lastly, we have *espresso bars*, which stand as a metaphor for those "not yet captured" by – or rejecting – the grooves or ladders,[500] which MacIntyre represents as "coffee bar bohemians who sense the phoney everywhere (and rightly) except in themselves (wrongly)."[501] In this we see an interesting parallel with Robert Merton's deviance typology,[502] insofar as an 'espresso bar bohemian' may see themselves as acting in a state of rebellion (according to Merton's typology), according to MacIntyre's critique the are deluding themselves in a state of retreatism.

Moving beyond explicitly Marxist critiques of capitalism,[503] MacIntyre has remained critical of other non- or post-Marxist critiques of the economic and political powerholders of the contemporary world. An obvious example of this – relevant to MacIntyre's applicability to sociological theory – is his critique of C. Wright Mills. MacIntyre claims that what Mills'

> analysis misses is the active connivance of the ruled in the dominance of their rulers. Conservative political theorists would describe this connivance in terms of 'the consent of the governed': Marxists would describe it in terms of the ideological pervasiveness of the ideas of the ruling class. Neither would miss the existence of this social bond. It has traditionally been missed by liberal radicals, who have therefore been prone to conspiracy theories of society. And, although Wright Mills

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[498] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 130.
[499] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 130, emphasis original.
[500] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 130.
[501] MacIntyre, "Freedom and Revolution," 130-31.
[502] Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," in *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (eds.) Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2021), 388-93.
[503] Further discussion of MacIntyre's engagement with Marx and Marxism can be found in Chapter 4.

> was well aware of the fallacies of such theories, there is at least a hint of conspiracy about *The Power Elite*.[504]

What Mills misses on MacIntyre's account is a sufficient account of human agency and action to allow for the active role individuals can – and do – play in the institutions which dominate us. This results, MacIntyre argues, in more hand-waving than articulate theorizing about the connections that exist and the manner in which they function. While recognizing the role of social structure in influencing the development and dispersion of powerful people,[505] Mills still had a tendency to cement power in the individual, even if not in a manner similar to those who idolized the individuals *qua* individuals. It is easy for someone like Mills to say that the various branches of elite society are all connected, but it is another thing entirely to explain how this happens, the role the individual has in reproducing it rather than merely being acted upon, and indeed *whether this is a concerted phenomenon or happenstance*. Because of this, Mills' claims that we cannot simply psychologize the power elite in a manner typical of liberal individual ideals are unsupported by a wider metatheoretical account of how such people gain power, especially with an eye to the fact that social institutions are not monolithic and insoluble, but rather made up of individuals. Indeed, in Mills we can see lots of reasons provided for this or that particular social phenomenon (how *x* or *y* individual became rich, for instance), but a lot of hand-waving regarding how the social structures he claims impacted such development rather than articulate theorizing.

While *The Power Elite* is replete with examples of 'social influences' upon this or that person becoming rich or powerful, from the tax rates to the electoral system, to the environment, to the state of war or peace, etc., Mills does not develop a general theory of *how* or *why* such influences result in such men of power. Because of this, Mills' theories often fall into a trap where he is beginning with the individual and working backwards analytically to justify the 'what' of their existence, rather than attempting some form of casual accounting which can explain the why,[506] providing a 'causal narrative' rather than a general social theory.[507] The distinction here is important, as a causal narrative "tells us how and why something came to be but will only be

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[504] Alasdair MacIntyre, "C. Wright Mills," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 242.
[505] See for instance C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 97-98.
[506] Mark A. Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," in *The Theory Primer: A Sociological Guide*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 4-8.
[507] Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," 31-32.

applicable to the single instance at hand. It's not generalizable."[508] In this sense, Mills falls into a similar trap as many anti-Communists, whose views represent a "mere negation of Communism, which shares its fundamental errors."[509] While it could be argued that the range of references which Mills makes provides evidence for his claims, these evidential references only provide us with "more historical information, but not an explanation" as to why these structures are the way they are, and how individuals can and do get to the level of power as those Mills is describing.[510] Indeed, Mills doesn't attempt to evaluate or falsify his theories, and because of this there is no way of testing the robustness or substantive or logical implications of his claims, leaving the question of the contingency of his claims unanswered.[511]

Reinforcing MacIntyre's comments above, we can see Mills beginning an important project to identify power in American society when he argues that the American elite is

> A confused and confusing set of images, and yet when we hear or when we use such words as Upper Class, Big Shot, Top Brass, [etc.] we feel at least vaguely that we know what they mean, and often do. What we do not often do, however, is connect each of these images with the others; we make little effort to form a coherent picture in our mind of the elite as a whole. Even when, very occasionally we try to do this, we usually come to believe that it is indeed no 'whole'; that like our images of it, there is no one elite, but many, and that they are not really connected with one another. What we must realize is that until we do try to see it as a whole, perhaps our impression that it may not be is a result merely of our lack of analytic rigor and sociological imaginations.[512]

What starts as a concerted effort to identify and account for a particular social institution ('the elite') quickly dissolves into an air of begging the question. From this it is easy to see MacIntyre's comment about the whiff of conspiracy in Mills make sense, as the rich, the powerful, the state, the military, etc., are 'all connected' but it cannot be explained in any general sense, and you just have to trust Mills that it is the case. Perhaps most importantly, because the connections Mills is seeking to link together cannot be properly theorized, action against such power elite seems

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[508] Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," 31-32.
[509] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 20.
[510] Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," 31.
[511] Schneider, "Theories and Theorizing," 20-21, 30.
[512] Mills, *The Power Elite*, 385, emphasis added.

impossible given the range of variables which 'contribute' to their development, leaving the individual feeling trapped within the system which Mills ostensibly sought to critique.[513]

Despite his critiques of Foucault, MacIntyre in this instance is more influenced by Foucault than by Mills, given his eye to the role of the individual *within* the power structure (rather than merely oppressed *by* the power structure), with all the dangers and opportunities that presents, theoretically and practically, and more influenced by Popper given his concern for generalizable theory and its falsifiability. This, combined with his critical analysis of Marcuse,[514] Goffman,[515] Weber,[516] and other theorists drawn on by sociologists represent other useful catalysts for his critical application within sociology. Further discussion of more contemporary social theory can be found in Chapter 7, with MacIntyre's critiques of Marcuse in §7.1 and challenges to Bourdieu and 'public sociology' in §7.2 and §7.3.

2.10.(b) A Critical Response to Analytic and Emotivist Philosophy

While being critical of many Marxist and non-Marxist social theories, especially as they relate to capitalism, MacIntyre does not fall into the trap of 'mere negation,' rather he addresses them, and often in their own terms. This is evident especially in how he problematizes the claims by analytic and emotivist philosophers used often (although not exclusively) in their critiques of Marx – and materialist philosophies more generally. These are worth representing here as some of these critiques have likewise either been levied against sociology as a whole – or have infiltrated the *weltanschauung* of sociology such that it has led to internal inconsistencies not dissimilar from those to be discussed in Chapter 7.

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[513] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 155.
[514] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*. MacIntyre is critical throughout the work, but this is largely summed up in the conclusion: "What Marcuse invites us to repeat is part of the experience of Stalinism. One cannot liberate people from above; one cannot re-educate them at this fundamental level. As the young Marx saw, men must liberate themselves. The only education that liberates is self-education. To make men objects of liberation by others is to assist in making them passive instruments, is to case them for the role of inert matter to be moulded into forms chosen by the elite." (92).
[515] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 32, 35,115-17, 221; Mangham, "MacIntyre and the Manager," 192; Peter McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*, (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 26.
[516] MacIntyre, "Beyond Max Weber;" MacIntyre, "Weber at His Weakest;" MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 26, 86, 114, 143-44. While MacIntyre acknowledges the accuracies in many of Weber's theories of the modern capitalist world, he also identifies the weaknesses therein, especially those indebted to Weber's connection to Nietzsche. For critiques of Nietzsche, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 26, 116-20, 256-59.; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, throughout the work but especially 196-215.

Noting that the "question put by materialism concerns the relation of our thinking to the external world," MacIntyre asks whether we ought to attribute independent existence to the external world or not and notes the analytic challenges in such assertions.[517] For an analytic philosopher, any answer to this question "is misleading because the question is logically improper. We cannot ask whether independent existence is an attribute of the world because independent existence is not an attribute."[518] On this account, the question put forth by materialism is meaningless. Analytic philosophers have also critiques Marx's use of the metaphor of the 'demiurge of history,' arguing that "we can speak properly of this or that factor producing this or that train of events, but we cannot speak of any factor as the cause of the historical process … history as such cannot have a prime mover."[519] These critiques of course challenge not only some core Marxist claims, but also claims shared by many contemporary sociologists to various degrees, whether Marxist or otherwise.

The problem with these challenges, MacIntyre argues, is that they divorce Marxism (and materialist thought) from all practical concerns.[520] While not demanding 'immanent critique or nothing!' MacIntyre is right to point out that one cannot take a philosophy centrally aimed at practical considerations and simply deny that. Indeed, as will be pointed out in Chapter 7, it is perhaps partially the infiltration of such analytic ideas which has caused some of the problems between sociological theory and the attempt at 'public sociology.' MacIntyre expands on this by arguing that Marx asked questions about the 'demiurge of history' "because he wished to *change* history. This is his motive for trying to understand it. Thus Marx's questions are not theoretical, but practical,"[521] and any attempt by analytic thinkers to disregard this leads to "a complete divorce of ethical theory from moral practice,"[522] which is something MacIntyre adamantly rejects, as noted above in §2.5.

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[517] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 14-15.
[518] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.
[519] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.
[520] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.
[521] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15, emphasis original.
[522] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.

Such analytic divorces between theory and practice provide the ideal breeding ground for emotivist theories of ethics whereby one can disconnect the analyses of moral judgments from moral activity itself.[523] Such theories generally proceed from the following contentions:

> 'This is right' means 'I approve of this: do so also'; that moral judgments therefor express feelings rather than assert facts; and that this analysis of moral judgments is a logical investigation which tells us what moral judgments mean, but does not pretend to tell us which moral judgements we should make in any situation.[524]

This inevitably, MacIntyre argues, leads to ambiguity, as well as dangerous half-truths and falsehoods. Beginning with the half-truth 'it is wrong to exploit' MacIntyre notes that the claim is an emotive statement, but "so is the multiplication table when and angry schoolmaster corrects a small boy who has formulated it incorrectly; so is any statement uttered with emotion."[525] This leads to the problematic positivist division of statements into those of logic – which are formally true – those of sciences – which are empirically verifiable – and those of poetry, ethics, and metaphysics. A division which represents a "confusion of logical types."[526]

Further to this, proceeding from the assumption that moral judgments function in terms of approval or disapproval is problematic, as MacIntyre exemplifies using the example of a son who approves of socialism and a father who disapproves of socialism:

> When I say, 'Jones approves of socialism', I do not mean, 'At this moment Jones is experiencing certain feelings.' Jones may not be thinking about anything remotely connected with socialism, but it is still true that he approves of it. Hence approvals and disapprovals are not psychological symptoms … for they are neither exclamatory nor descriptive.[527]

They are, rather, semi-hypotheticals insofar as when MacIntyre says that Jones approves of socialism he means "that Jones has in the past acted towards socialism in a way that has led us to expect similar behaviour in the future," indeed, if moral judgments have any reference point MacIntyre argues, it is to behaviour.[528]

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[523] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.
[524] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 15.
[525] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 16.
[526] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 16.
[527] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 16.
[528] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 16.

It is this reference point which raises the question of morals at all, as only through practice can something be considered 'moral.' Morality, for MacIntyre, is not a series of positions, but a practical question of what actions (or non-actions) we take, toward what ends, and why.[529] This is often buried under traditional moral philosophy's engagement with questions of the good or the right, losing itself in a false dilemma about whether things like 'the good' refer to objective or subjective phenomena:

> For it is not the function of statements like 'this is good' to refer at all, and therefore the question to what they refer can never be answered. Statements containing such words as 'right', 'good' and the subtler expressions of moral approbation and disapprobation are not answers to factual enquires but to appeals for guidance. The function of moral judgments is brought out most clearly not when we are able to assert, 'this is right', but when we have to enquire: 'Which course of action it right?'[530]

Ethics logically entails the question of practice, and moral judgments must "announce our decisions."[531] This is something which many analytic and emotivist moral philosophers have either forgotten or acted to obfuscate. Emotive theory in particular suggests that all moral disagreement is a matter of emotions and therefore cannot be rationally formed into any kind of argument.

This claim is problematic, however, as "if this were so, argument would be irrelevant anyway, since all reasons for acting in one way rather than another would be irrelevant except as emotional reinforcements."[532] Undergirding claims like this is the emotivist assumption that language is *either* emotive *or* descriptive, but that it cannot be both.[533] This in turn is problematic given that often language can be both. Giving and example of this, MacIntyre notes that "[i]t is not the case that we read Engels' description of England in 1844 and *then* draw the conclusion that this system ought to be condemned. Any such conclusion would be superfluous. The description itself was the condemnation."[534] While this may seem like an emotivist basis for the value of social and political satire ('this representation makes me feel bad/smug, ergo it must be satire'), satire actually loses its strength when based entirely on emotion. Without a shared community of

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[529] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 16-17.
[530] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 17.
[531] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 17.
[532] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 17.
[533] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 17.
[534] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 18, emphasis added.

understanding and moral principles to make direct or indirect reference to, *anything* can be satire (or *nothing* is satire), making the value of the process nil by reducing it to relativist description.[535]

2.10.(c) Critique of Liberalism and Human Rights

MacIntyre's broader critique of modernity,[536] and all its consequences beyond capitalism, including liberal and neoliberal politics,[537] is often what aids in individuals claiming MacIntyre is a conservative. But MacIntyre breaks through the naïve liberal-conservative binary by identifying that while liberalism began as a challenge to "the authority of tradition in the name of a universalizing Reason, [it] has now itself been transformed into a tradition … that legitimates the institutions of state and capitalism and, in turn, is sustained by them."[538] From such modern liberal politics we can see the rise of *human rights* as an idea which is often seen as a global expansion of liberal ideals, which MacIntyre dismisses as liberal philosophical fictions,[539] which ought to be dismissed in the same breath as "witches and … unicorns,"[540] and represent a sort of case-study of MacIntyre's rejection of modern liberal philosophy.[541]

MacIntyre critiques many of the approaches to human rights as an ideal, arguing they are largely empty in their ability to motivate action,[542] and even when able to be used by the oppressed

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[535] MacIntyre's critique of emotivism and the function of satire within traditions or practices would make for interesting future areas of investigation beyond this current work.
[536] Lutz "From Voluntarist Nominalism to Rationalism to Chaos," 98; Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique;" Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity.;" McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*.
[537] MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 243-46; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 326-403; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Political and Philosophical Epilogue: A View of *The Poverty of Liberalism* by Robert Paul Wolff," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 280-84; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Poetry as Political Philosophy: Notes on Burke and Yeats," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 169, Alasdair MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 209, 215; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 326-48, 392, 397-400; MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" 64; Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 52, fn. 143, 61-68, 130; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a Critic of Marxism," 705-6.
[538] Knight, "Introduction," 21. See also MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 326-48.
[539] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 77-78; Mark D. Retter, "The Road Not Taken: On MacIntyre's Human Rights Skepticism," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 63, no. 2, (2018): 189.
[540] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 69.
[541] For further engagement with MacIntyre's coverage of rights – whether 'human' or 'natural' – see David J. Riesbeck, "Aristotle and Natural Rights Revisited," *Reason Papers*, 43, no. 1 (2023): 133-59; Kamil Aksiuto, "Natural Law Against Natural Rights in the Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre," in *The Philosophy of Legal Change: Theoretical Perspectives and Practical Processes*, (eds.) Maciej Chmieliński and Michał Rupniewski, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 109-23.
[542] Bill Bowring, "Misunderstanding MacIntyre on Human Rights," 206.

to obtain rights, in "all such cases there were and are better arguments for doing what justice and the common good require than those appeals provide," and so while "their effectiveness in such cases is … to be welcomed" it also ought to be "subjected to critical scrutiny."[543] The liberal origins of modern rights discourse often trap both the theorist and those appealing to the frameworks within such liberal roots, starting with "the human person *qua* autonomous individual, prior to social commitments—what Marx called the egoistic man."[544] This has become more and more obvious, in large part, due to the prevalence of 'utility' as a counter-concept to 'right' within the liberal tradition, inherently directing both theorist and plain persons toward the instrumentality which Weber critiques the modern day of being dominated by. Indeed, this process reproduces itself from early childhood in the social conditioning of all persons:

> In effect, these idioms have been integrated into daily life, as dominant modes of evaluation used and presupposed by contemporary moral and political discourse. The first idiom presents the teleological concept of "utility" as the general mode of evaluation for political decision-making, through weighing costs and benefits. The second, the concept of "right," responds to the shortcomings of the first, protecting individual interests or autonomy from the maximization of collective utility, by buttressing the protective function of moral rules. Without some mediating principle, however, there is no common standard to reconcile the first idiom with the second.[545]

MacIntyre notes the inadequacy of these concepts for mediating conflict. For instance, fixation on concepts like 'freedom' and 'equality' within liberal rights theory lack sufficient awareness of the ends by reference to which it could be claimed that freedom or equality are actually goods. Thus, "in the absence of any common standard, the claims and counter-claims made on the basis of 'utility' and 'right' become ostensibly incommensurable."[546] This, along with an erosion of community connections leads to "intense mutual distrust in political discourse" through an "erosion of communal standards,"[547] and an inability to engage in dialogue *within* ones own

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[543] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 78.
[544] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 192, emphasis original.
[545] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 192-93. See also, MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 114-17, 133-38; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 69-71; MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," 211-13; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," in *Ethics and Politics, Selected Essays Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2007), 180-85; MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Social Practice," 113-21; Alasdair MacIntyre, "How to Identify Ethical Principles," *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research* I, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Pub. No. (OS) 78-0013 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), 10-37.
[546] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 193.
[547] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 198.

historical tradition, let alone with *other* traditions. This problem of indefinitely side-stepping questions of the good in attempting to overcome the positionality of traditions, with the aim of creating an idealistic 'neutral' space,[548] only ends up propagating an emotivist culture, where "moral views are reducible to non-rational desires, preferences or emotions."[549] This in turn leads to a utilitarian conception of human rights "based on power, and relative cost and benefit,"[550] which "implicitly expresses individual rights in irreducible opposition to social and political life," thus leading to the development and reproduction of a system of valuation which operates – tacitly *and* explicitly – from individualist assumptions.[551] All of these assumptions, it is important to note, proceed on the assumption that such 'neutral' conceptions of rights and individualistic opposition to social life have a determinate, rational basis – something MacIntyre argues cannot be supported rationally by the liberal tradition that spawned it.[552]

MacIntyre distinguishes four 'species of rights:'[553] 1) those conferred by positive or customary law, 2) those conferred from promises or contract, 3) those held by participants in social practice – deriving from the rules constitutive of the goods of those practices – and finally 4) what he calls 'natural rights,' meaning any rights not within the other three. Specifically, these 'natural rights' appeal to "independent standard[s] of justice by which what is due to each human being under established enactments, social roles, statuses and practices can be evaluated."[554] Four general features to natural rights claims are identified by MacIntyre: *first*, they represent "tradition-independent standards that require indubitable rational foundations," and in this manner "embody the enlightenment search for universal rational principles … independent of a tradition of enquiry into the good life."[555] *Second*, such rights are conceptualized as entitlements inherently "attached

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[548] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 65.
[549] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 193.
[550] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 194.
[551] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 193.
[552] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 194. "In criticizing 'rights,' Macintyre targets the emergent idiom in contemporary liberal societies, and the foundations upon which that idiom rests." See also, MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 68-73, 253; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Community, Law, and the Idiom and Rhetoric of Rights," *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture* 26 (1991): 97-98, 103-6; MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Social Practice," 116-21; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity,* xx-xxiv.
[553] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Right to Die Garrulously," in *Death and Decision,* (ed.) Ernan McMullin, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1978); Alasdair MacIntyre, "Are There Any Natural Rights?" *Charles F. Adams Lecture,* Bowdoin College (1983).
[554] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 194.
[555] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 195.

to the status of being human," but understood *apart* from a human telos.[556] *Third,* natural rights claim priority over any social, historical, or political order, seen as 'first principles' for practical reasoning. And thus *fourth*, they represent "independent evaluative standards or constraints on ends pursued within society."[557] MacIntyre refers to human rights as natural rights in large part because he recognizes this practice of "practical reasoning in contemporary human rights discourse" which "typically proceeds from such rights as first principles, to evaluate what is morally due to individuals within political communities."[558] This approach within human rights discourse takes on an overriding quality against all other reasons, and so when MacIntyre uses 'natural rights' "he refers to a distinct type of moral claim which *excludes consideration of human goods as the most basic evaluative standard for action*."[559] This, of course, doesn't make sense coming from any moral position based in human goods, especially an Aristotelian one such as MacIntyre's.

Despite these critiques, MacIntyre is *not* opposed to justifying subjective moral rights within a social framework of 'natural justice.'[560] He claims that the object or action due between persons would thus be a matter of 'objective right.'[561] However, such reasoning would require a framework larger and more interwoven than the *a priori* approach of liberal human rights discourse, as "the assertion that someone has a right … presupposes a prior claim about what the virtue of justice requires of somebody else. The prior claim is that some person, A, is bound by justice to give X to another person, B."[562] It is because of this that MacIntyre argues that "[t]he question of what rights have or should have would be answerable only in terms of answers to a prior set of questions about what sort of community this is, directed towards the achievement of what sort of good, and inculcating what kinds of virtues."[563] It is obvious from this that rights are not something MacIntyre *necessarily* opposes, but rather he opposes rights as an abstract concept

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[556] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 195.
[557] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 195.
[558] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 195.
[559] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 196, emphasis added.
[560] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 196.
[561] MacIntyre, "What More Needs to be Said?" 272; MacIntyre, "Community, Law, and the Idiom and Rhetoric of Rights," 105; MacIntyre, "Are There Any Natural Rights?" 10-12, 14-15; MacIntyre, "The Right to Die Garrulously," 75-76.
[562] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 196.
[563] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Return to Virtue Ethics," in *The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Vatican II: A Look Back and a Look Ahead,* (ed.) Russell Smith, (Braintree, MA: Pope John Center, 1990): 247-48.

which divorces one from the practices and interactions of human beings, and here we see MacIntyre's fundamental concern with natural rights:

> They apply standards to human action with no evidential basis in the functioning of human activities. Instead, they arbitrarily determine rightful conduct from an under-determinative noumenal world, without evidential accountability to the actual achievement of goods through human activities [in a phenomenal world].[564]

Human rights, so conceived within the liberal tradition, necessarily atomize individuals *even when mobilized by oppressed communities*.[565] Rights ought to – by MacIntyre's account – be elemental components of a larger question of justice, which involves a series of overlapping embedded considerations for *what* we owe others, *why* we owe them it, and in what social, historical, cultural, and traditional context we owe them it. Contemporary human rights discourses simply claim that 'the world owes you X' without asking, or justifying, *why*.[566] When grounded in theories of natural justice, violations of rights can seek a "just and effective remedy for victims" but, when disconnected from natural justice, rights theory "exacerbates our contemporary moral crisis by empowering the individualistic pursuit of rights claims and enhancing bureaucratic authority to mediate those claims,"[567] contributing to the 'individualist fallacy' of assuming that *wanting* or *willing* something is a *reason in itself* for having a right to it.[568]

This individualism stems from, *and* contributes to, the "methodological abstraction of the autonomous individual … separat[ing] moral thought from the source of justification for social norms, leading to *anomie*."[569] It is because of this that such rights are a 'fiction,' as there are no good reasons "to think these rights exist because every attempt so far to give such reasons has failed by its own standards, and no good reason has been provided to think a successful justification will be given."[570] In part the 'first principle' nature of liberal human rights are seen as "mythological beasts" for MacIntyre because unlike Thomist-Aristotelian first principles, "they

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[564] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 200.
[565] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 78.
[566] This is why certain approaches to human rights theory would not necessarily fall victim to MacIntyre's critiques – a recognition theory approach such as that proposed by Axel Honneth for instance, given the necessarily communal consideration of recognition in the development and maintenance of self-consciousness, and mutual recognition as a shared human good. See Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), 16-17, 28, 42, 49, 68-69, 92-130, 171.
[567] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 196-97.
[568] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 198; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 67.
[569] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 198, emphasis original.
[570] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 199.

do not rest on any phenomenal experience of actuality by which to provide substantive content for the judgment," rather, the "stating point for understanding normative standards is places outside phenomenal experience … [so] that theory becomes unable to articulate its accountability to practice."[571] Here again one can see the Marxist influence in contemporary MacIntyrean thought,[572] as much as the Thomist-Aristotelian influence,[573] as the underlying concern for praxis remains, embedded in his critique of the liberal division between theory and practice,[574] clear in human rights discourse and elsewhere.

Because we necessarily exist as part of a pre-existing political community, in ways "largely independent of and prior to our personal wills and preferences and so of our acts of consent,"[575] much in the manner described by Aristotle,[576] any liberal attempts to justify society (as well as rights) as an *a priori* rational collection of consenting individuals is necessarily undermined. This is exactly why MacIntyre argues that liberal rights theories cannot sufficiently include the vulnerable and disabled, given that they are not grounded in a conception of *radical human dependence* such as the moral theory he has developed.[577]

2.10.(d) Critique of Communitarianism

Remaining obviously anti-capitalist in his critiques, as well as being critical of liberalism as a political system and theoretical framework for ethics and economics,[578] MacIntyre has often been

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[571] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 200.
[572] Alasdair MacIntyre, "What is Marxist Theory For?" in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 95-103; MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 225-34; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxix; MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 166.
[573] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 236, 244; MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Renaissance Aristotelians," 3, 6; MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," 36-38; MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," 76.
[574] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 271; see also MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv, xxvi-xxix.
[575] MacIntyre, "Are There Any Natural Rights?" 17.
[576] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Politics*, (trans.) Carnes Lord, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 4-5. "The city is thus prior by nature to the household and to each of us," and because man is "by nature a political animal," anyone who is without a city is either "a beast or a god." While his naturalist, organicist claims about the city may be historically fallible, it is easy to follow that for any given person who lives in a time of society that that society pre-exists them, and so assuming that they *personally* had a hand in the creation of that society, or that they *personally* can independently withdraw their consent in some fashion, is ridiculous. However, this does not imply that one as an individual has no political agency for reshaping said society, a point noted by MacIntyre throughout his entire career.
[577] Retter, "The Road Not Taken," 202; MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 119-54.
[578] And by extension of this, bring critical of conservative political movements based on Classical Liberal assumptions – movements which typify political conservativism in many parts of the world. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.

*mis*represented as a communitarian.[579] Given his focus on the necessarily interlocking importance of the individual and community, his focus on the question of the good and the need of local communities to provide the means for the living out of virtuous lives, MacIntyre has oft been called a communitarian – despite his explicit rejection of this term. It makes sense that one would in broad strokes shuffle him into this 'third way' approach which rejects the monoliths of liberal individualism and social conservativism, given the overlapping concerns in MacIntyre's work and that of many communitarians.[580] It is worth briefly noting however a) what communitarianism *is*, and b) why MacIntyre is *not* one, to better contextualize his work, as well as its value for sociology.

Etzioni notes that political and philosophical focus on the role of the community has stretched back millennia, across a range of linguistic, ethnic, and religious contexts,[581] a theme acknowledged by other communitarian thinkers like Avineri and de-Shalit.[582] Making the distinction between 'old' – or pre-1990s – communitarians, and 'new' communitarians, Etzioni notes a move away from the community as being seen as inherently anti-individualistic or deterministic in a negative sense, seeking instead some form of balance between the individual and the community.[583] However, in giving an example of mandatory drug testing, Etzioni proceeds to merely reproduce a utilitarian calculation,[584] demonstrating a lack of ethical differentiation between communitarianism and utilitarianism with a community garden. Etzioni proceeds to attempt to posit that it is not the market or the state but rather *society* which is the major realm of consideration,[585] a theme taken up by many early sociologists like Tönnies and Durkheim.[586] Communitarians have argued that "much of social conduct is, and that more ought to be, sustained

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[579] See Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit, "Introduction," in *Communitarianism and Individualism*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-4, 9-10.
[580] This is evident in Shlomo and de-Shalit's work, where given the shared themes they cited MacIntyre as a communitarian. While this work was published prior to MacIntyre's explicit rejection of the term in 1995, it demonstrates the somewhat grasping-at-straws approach in which communitarian thinkers have attempted to bundle theorists together. Etzioni was at least cognizant enough to note MacIntyre not only not connecting himself with the label, but actively rejecting it. See Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 3-4, 9-10; Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, (ed.) Amitai Etzioni, (Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), xxi-xxii, n. 9.
[581] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," ix.
[582] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 1-2.
[583] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," x-xi.
[584] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xi.
[585] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xii.
[586] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," ix-x.

and guided by an informal web of social bonds and by moral voices in the community,"[587] and that this conduct ought to take places in communities seen as "webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values … [which] need not be geographically concentrated."[588] This presents several problems for MacIntyre.

First, given MacIntyre's rejection of utilitarianism, the utilitarian calculations undergirding elements of communitarianism make sense to reject from his own position. *Second*, given his nuanced view that local communities are essential, but that one must recognize the impact of both the state and the market if one is to be able to develop a sustainable politics of self-defence or potentially overcome one or the other, we can see an obvious issue arise. MacIntyre's early Marxist influence remains strong in this sense and would represent grounds for rejecting communitarianism as presented by Etzioni. *Third*, MacIntyre provides theoretical means for understanding how and why, through various human actions and involvements, individuals can be embedded in communities of practice – something Etzioni simply hand-waves away as 'informal bonds.' For MacIntyre these bonds can be very much formal without being inherently state-centric or market-driven – as evidenced in his many historical examples. *Fourth*, when challenged on the risk of majoritarianism, Etzioni simply praises the constitution as a defence mechanism, as a form of community consensus in legal form.[589] This does not, however, give a historical account of how such legal traditions evolved and how they might change – either positively or negatively – a gap which MacIntyre would strongly critique given his historical concern. *Fifth*, while recognizing that it "is best to think about communities as nested, each within a more encompassing one,"[590] a position MacIntyre shares, Etzioni then proceeds to claim that "there are well-ensconced guidelines and safeguards that help determine where the proper 'borders' of communities are, and that show that there is no inherent contradiction between a respect for rights and for community ethos."[591] This is a claim not backed up by Etzioni. While everyone from Bourdieu to MacIntyre recognizes the 'fuzziness' of different social boundaries, MacIntyre again provides tools to make sense of such distinctions where Etzioni does not. For instance, the goods internal to a given

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[587] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xii.
[588] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xiii.
[589] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xiv-xv.
[590] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xiv.
[591] Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Rights and Responsibilities," xvi.

practice, and the virtues which enable its pursuit, help account for whether a given space, time, or activity could be considered part of a given community or not. Such an account *can* build on legal frameworks – depending on the tradition or practice in question – but *doesn't have to* default to an *a priori* constitutionalism. *Lastly*, MacIntyre centers the question of universal goods with an eye to social-historical situatedness throughout his work. A tradition or practice starts from a place of total contingency but can develop towards more and more universal forms of knowing. *And* it can engage with other traditions or practices, with all the consequences this entails. Indeed, for MacIntyre,

> What the objectivity of moral and other evaluative standards amounts to is to the be understood only from within the context of and in terms of the structure of certain types of historically developed practice, in which the initial interests of those engaged in such practices are transformed through their activities into an interest in conforming to standards of excellence required by those practices, so that the goods internal to them may be achieved. … It is only in such contexts that the question of 'whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking' can be answered in respect of moral thought.[592]

This is something which seems absent from Etzioni's account of communitarianism – as he represents the communities as social-historical givens, but without the capacity to aim towards any non-situated or transhistorical goods for either themselves or their members. MacIntyre's focus on the question of translatability and historical examples of evolving traditions which changed precisely because of goods outside themselves which they encountered rebuts this.

Others distinguish between the methodological considerations of communitarianism – that the individual is not apart from their society, something MacIntyre and any sociologist worth the title would not dispute – and the normative considerations of communitarianism.[593] Noting under the methodological concern that "the 'communitarian' community is more than a mere association; it is a unity in which the individuals are members. This membership is neither artificial nor instrumental, but rather has its own intrinsic value,"[594] Avineri and de-Shalit again shed light on an undertheorized account of the human good which MacIntyre would challenge. For instance, MacIntyre's stress on the role human desire plays in human agency and the striving towards virtue

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[592] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 233.
[593] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 2.
[594] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 4.

and good(s), along with the social-historical situatedness of communities which enable such striving, demonstrate that such communities do not have some abstract intrinsic value. There may be goods which are internal to a given practice, for instance, but they are goods relative to the individuals who make up the community. Such abstract intrinsicality runs the risk of falling into deontological justifications for the community – something which we have already demonstrated MacIntyre rejects. This connects with the 'inherent good of the community' present in the normative communitarian arguments,[595] demonstrating that whether methodologically or normatively, there is an underlying problem in the communitarian account based in the relation of individual humans to the goods of life.

Of lesser concern, but worth noting, is that the unclear borders of communities noted by Etzioni is present in communitarian thought itself, with Avineri and de-Shalit having repeatedly to mention 'some' as a necessary prefix to any claim about communitarian thought throughout their summary,[596] demonstrating a weakness of core theoretically unifying elements besides 'community' as a point of reference. One example which demonstrates this is where Etzioni claims that communitarians move away from market considerations, while Avineri and de-Shalit argue that some communitarians leave room for market considerations and non-communitarian relations in their theories.[597] The theoretical weakness of communitarianism is further demonstrated when Avineri and de-Shalit attempt to respond to the individualist critique that communitarianism is too ambiguous and ambivalent – a critique I suppose I share – by pointing to what *some communitarians* have done (all in different directions), and then turning about and arguing that "individualism itself does not offer a clearer view"[598] – also a critique I share. While it cannot be argued that any tradition of thought has such clear boundaries as to easily be able to claim 'all people who believe *x* are members of *y*,' the theme of 'theorizing relating to the community' *is* far too broad to be meaningful, *and* individualist – especially liberal individualist – accounts are equally problematic, albeit for different reasons. Such a response from communitarians demonstrates the under-theorization of crucial individual and community capacities, including accounts of the human self, human goods, practices, traditions, and other necessary elements which

[595] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 6-7.
[596] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 1-11.
[597] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 10.
[598] Avineri and de-Shalit, "Introduction," 11.

articulate the connection between the individual and the community. MacIntyre rejects communitarianism not merely in a reactionary manner, having been lumped in against his will, but *also* because their theoretical engagement in both methods and politics are idealistic to the point of being unfeasibly actionable in social science research, political policy making, or community organizing.

The weakness of the communitarian position is evidenced by Honneth, who noted in 2010 – in a manner paralleling many of the MacIntyrean critiques – that

> Now that the debate over the relationship between liberalism and communitarianism has abated just as suddenly as it emerged two decades ago, the gap between philosophical theory and political praxis appears to be growing again. Back when the writings of Michael Walzer, John Rawls or Charles Taylor were broadly discussed among intellectuals, political philosophy seemed to have the power to inform political praxis with theoretical ideas and clues. For a brief moment, it seemed that philosophical efforts to properly define the concept of social justice had an influence on the development of political aims and programmes. Yet today, after the challenge of communitarianism has subsided, we are faced once again with the same malaise about a disconnect between political philosophy and political action.[599]

Here we can see precisely the problematic outcome of the ungrounded theory of communitarianism which MacIntyre rejects. Indeed, even in Honneth's account there is something MacIntyre would reject: his representation that it was the fact that communitarian thought was being discussed by intellectuals and academics that was the cause of its temporary impactfulness. It is these very top-down elitist assumptions about the way in which knowledge does – and ought to – impact society that MacIntyre challenges by putting forward his account of engaged communities of practice.[600]

2.10.(e) Critical Pedagogy

Indeed, challenges to these elitist assumptions are perhaps best demonstrated in MacIntyre's pedagogy. His is a critical approach to teaching, as the format of education and the shaping of syllabuses have social impact, often leading to means-focused educations and universities assuming the shape of the status quo.[601] It is precisely because of this that MacIntyre challenges

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[599] Axel Honneth, *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012), 35.
[600] See variously MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 231, 233-34; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187-25; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 176-83.
[601] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 141-45. See also, MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 129, 136-37.

contemporary understandings of education – arguing for an educational format which would require a major shift in resources and priorities, which, if successful, would "produce in our students habits of mind which would unfit [*sic*] them for the contemporary world," something which he argues "ought in any case to be one of our educational aims"[602] given the state of our contemporary world as dominated by liberal individualist and capitalist ideologies.

Further to this, we can see MacIntyre grappling with the problem of the 'educator knowing better' than the student[603] and of the communal and practically necessary aspect of learning.[604] There is for instance a moral as well as an epistemological consideration in the formulation of university syllabi and degree organization for MacIntyre. He notes the importance of a level of generality to education for all students, whether they are to become academics or remain 'plain persons,' given that some of the biggest mistakes of the last century have been made by graduates of some of the highest-class universities. Specialization at the expense of breadth of education is a problem for him, and he notes the collapse of the U.S. hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management in 1997 as a perfect example of the consequences of this aim in contemporary education.[605]

Beyond the university, or even the institution of 'the school,' MacIntyre makes it clear that teaching, learning, and education generally, requires community as a whole, not merely schools.[606] This generalist approach is clear in many places throughout MacIntyre's work but is especially obvious in his opposition to the idea that teaching is a practice. While teaching *qua* teaching *isn't a practice* in MacIntyre's eyes, the teaching *of something* could represent *part of* a practice.[607] One always teaches something, and it is the something one is teaching that is part of a practice. For instance, someone teaching biology isn't engaged in a practice of teaching, they are engaged in the practice of biology by passing it along to others who wish to join the practice.

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[602] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 275.
[603] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 230-32.
[604] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 243.
[605] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57, no. 4 (2009): 359-62.
[606] Kenneth Wain, "MacIntyre: Teaching, Politics and Practice," *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 37, no 2 (2003): 236-38.
[607] Beadle "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice," 236.

All of these pedagogical concerns are for MacIntyre necessarily impactful on both the individuals who are teaching and learning, and the wider social world in which the education is taking place, and thus all his pedagogical concerns are, as noted above, concerns of *both* the development of a moral psychology *and* the self-knowledge of *all* who are engaged in educational environments – students and teachers – whether those environments are 'official,' in the sense of universities, or everyday, in the sense that we are constantly in spaces of potential learning and teaching. Further discussion regarding MacIntyre's pedagogical considerations can be found in Chapter 6, §6.2. (b).

What I hope is clear from these and many other elements of MacIntyre's theoretical history is that he is not the grumpy conservative whose understanding of tradition is merely a theoretical maintenance of the *status quo*, rather, his

> intellectual work has always been at the service of social criticism. (This is true not only of his early writings, but also of the work belonging to the *After Virtue* project. The notion that the MacIntyre of the *After Virtue* project is some sort of social and political conservative is given the lie by the extent to which his later work emphasizes the ways in which virtue theory and natural law ethics are countercultural and indeed revolutionary …). The social criticism to which MacIntyre aspired, though, was not a piecemeal affair but rather a systematic inquiry into the defectiveness of modern social, cultural, economic, and political institutions.[608]

In this manner, MacIntyre offers a lifetime's work of structural critique rather than what has become the all-too-common approach in the social theory of today of piecemeal, ungrounded, entirely negative criticism. Indeed, MacIntyre recognized that "[t]o engage in such systematic critique requires a standpoint from which to carry out such criticism,"[609] and so his criticism has always entailed a *positive* element of theoretical development[610] – epistemological, ontological, and ethical, something frequently lacking in so-called critical contemporary sociological theory.

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[608] Murphy, "Introduction," 2, emphasis original.
[609] Murphy, "Introduction," 2.
[610] MacIntyre recognized early on in his career that even his early presentations of critiques of liberalism, for instance, were expressed in such a way as to "presuppose a commitment to some set of positive affirmations," despite the fact that he also recognized that for "a considerable period I found it relatively easy to say what I was against, rather than what, if anything, I was for," something he has attempted to move past in his work going forward. See MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxiii.

From here we will now move to look at how MacIntyre's thought has a similar starting point from much of contemporary sociological theory through the examples of Marx and Weber, and how this shared origin, along with parallel areas of interest, lend themselves to a high potential level of translatability between concepts and theories from MacIntyre to sociology and back again. While we will be engaging with Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, and Bourdieu over the next few chapters, it is important to note that the total range of potential social theory engagement is beyond this work. A chapter could have been written on Goffman,[611] for example, given MacIntyre's engagement with him and shared interactionist interests. Importantly, Durkheim was also left out because of MacIntyre's relatively minor engagement with him,[612] but along with Goffman, and others who MacIntyre doesn't engage with but whose ideas clearly parallel his own in some ways (Mead, for instance), these represent future areas for potential dialogue.

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[611] The influence of Goffman on the metaphor and direction of MacIntyre's work is clear, but his explicit engagement is less explicit or central than with Weber or Marx, and he remains critical of elements of Goffman. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 32, 35, 115-17, 204, 221; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 219.

[612] He is briefly mentioned in some of his works but is not a major interlocutor for MacIntyre in the same manner as Weber or Marx. See MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 110, 178, or MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," 219-20, 223-25, where he mostly critiques Durkheim for his failing to include beyond a causal background a "corresponding account of the intentions, motives, and reasons involved" in his account of suicide. While MacIntyre recognizes the value of Durkheim for the study of religion, see MacIntyre, "Weber at his Weakest," 86-87, he is critical of how Durkheim's concept of anomie has been morphed in society.

SECTION 3: THEORETICAL TRADITIONS WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE: FROM HEGEL TO MARX

Chapter 3: Hegel as a Participant in – and Critic of – the Enlightenment

3.1. Intertwining Thinkers

Despite dying before the consolidation of sociology into a single discipline,[1] Karl Marx (1818-1883) has remained a massive influence on sociological thought[2] – with many thinkers spending entire careers defending and developing,[3] or critiquing,[4] his ideas. Indeed, despite much of Marx's work representing proto- or counter-sociological elements,[5] as well as a number of theoretical claims now considered inadequate or falsified,[6] he remains a central figure to contemporary sociology, especially the development of later sociological conflict theories.[7]

Particularly, Marx represents an important figure for the current work, given the role that he played in MacIntyre's development, evident in his early work and beyond. This shared influence on both MacIntyre, and contemporary sociological theory, provides another means of overlapping the tradition of contemporary sociology with the work of MacIntyre. To elaborate on this, in this Section I intend to cover a range of Marxian ideas which have played important roles in both sociology and MacIntyre's work. To accomplish this, I will first contextualize the origins of Marx's work, not merely because I wish to historically locate him in a wider range of traditions, but also because this is precisely what MacIntyre himself does:[8] arguing – in a manner influenced

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[1] Lichtheim, as cited by Bob Jessop, "Karl Marx," in *Key Sociological Thinkers*, (ed.) Rob Stones, (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 49; Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, and Indermohan Virk (eds.), "Introduction to Part III," *in Classical Sociological Theory*, (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 135.
[2] Bob Jessop, "Karl Marx," 49, 60; Mark A. Schneider, "Historical Materialism and Its Legacy," in *The Theory Primer*, (Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 87, 95-107.
[3] Erik Olin Wright, "Marxism after Communism," in *Social Theory & Sociology: The Classics and Beyond*, Stephen P. Turner (ed.), (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 121-45; Bob Jessop, "Karl Marx," 50; Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, and Virk, "Introduction to Part III," 140; Schneider, "Historical Materialism and Its Legacy," 95; Terry Eagleton, *Marx*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).
[4] Bob Jessop, "Karl Marx," 61-62; Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, and Virk, "Introduction to Part III," 140; Martindale, "Major Conflict Ideologies of the Nineteenth Century," 160-61.
[5] Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1966), 202; Bob Jessop, "Karl Marx," 49.
[6] Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, and Virk, "Introduction to Part III," 140-41.
[7] Don Martindale, "Sociological Conflict Theories," in *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*, (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1960), 176-77; Schneider, "Historical Materialism and Its Legacy," 95-101.
[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, (London, UK: Duckworth, 2001), 7-28; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Algebra of the Revolution," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge & Neil

by both Hegel and Marx – that any argument or tradition must be socially and historically located to be understood.[9]

As such, I will proceed in Chapter 3 by laying out some of the core Hegelian ideas which Marx (and later MacIntyre as well) challenge or build upon. Starting from a context of Enlightenment thought (§3.2), these will include Hegel's theoretical articulation of the concepts of alienation and objectification, (§3.2.[a]), the dialectical development of history (§3.2.[b]), the role of recognition in the development of self-consciousness and the 'master-slave' dialectic that comes out of this, (§3.2.[c]) and the idealistic elements of Hegel's philosophy from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* all the way to the *Philosophy of Right* (§3.2.[d]). In Chapter 4, I will draw a connection between Marx and sociology, (§4.1) tracing some of the shared Enlightenment influences between the two (§4.2). I will look at Marx's responses – both direct and indirect – to much of Hegel's thought (§4.3), highlighting the things Marx rejected (§4.3.[a]), the things he largely accepted (§4.3.[b]), and those he developed in new, more materialist ways (§4.3.[c]). I will also look at some concepts which he introduced himself which later played a valuable role in sociological thought. I will then move to MacIntyre's (§4.4) early philosophical and sociological engagements with Marx (§4.4.[a]), showing how despite his later move away from considering himself a Marxist (§4.4.[b]),[10] he certainly maintains Marxian elements in his thought (§4.4.[c]).[11] While there are many positions taken over Marx's role in MacIntyre's thought, such as Tony Burn's[12] thought that MacIntyre does not represent a Marxist position (but could be used to

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Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 41-42; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Marx," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge & Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 292, 297; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge & Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 53-66.

[9] MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; MacIntyre, Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry; MacIntyre, After Virtue; MacIntyre, Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity.

[10] Kelvin Knight, "Introduction," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 2-5;

[11] Despite his criticisms, he still engages with questions and concepts raised by Marx. See for instance Alasdair MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 223-34; Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight (eds.), "Introduction," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 5-7; Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 20-34.

[12] Tony Burns, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism? The Political Thought of Aristotle, Marx, and MacIntyre," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 35-53.

supplement Marxist positions), or Alex Callinicos'[13] or Sean Sayer's[14] more critical takes on MacIntyre's work as one-sided and ignorant of the advantages of modernity or capitalism,[15] it cannot be denied that Marx has played a central role to MacIntyre's work – much like Hegel did to Marx.[16]

A shared element which will be can be traced from Hegel - through Marx - to MacIntyre, which demonstrates not only a shared point of reference, but a common trend running through each, is that of Aristotle (§4.4.[d]). Groff notes that

> Marx knew his Aristotle. He also knew his Hegel, of course, but Hegel himself bears the stamp of Aristotle. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that there are fruitful points of philosophical contact to be established between Aristotelianism and Marxist theory.[17]

Likewise, it makes sense to connect Marx and Hegel to MacIntyre, not merely as historical happenstance, or evidence of a 'bygone era' of MacIntyre's thought, but with an eye to trends which have maintained themselves into the mature positions of MacIntyre's work. MacIntyre's framework of traditions and how they function, flourish, and interact with one another, helps make sense of not only the connections between Hegel, Marx, and himself, but also, as will be demonstrated below, the shared Aristotelian heritage of all three thinkers.

3.2. Hegel's Response to the Enlightenment

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[13] Alex Callinicos, "Two Cheers for Enlightenment Universalism: Or, Why It's Hard to Be an Aristotelian Revolutionary," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 54-78.
[14] Sean Sayers, "MacIntyre and Modernity," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 79-96.
[15] Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight (eds.), "Introduction," 7.
[16] See Niko Noponen, "Alienation, Practices, and Human Nature: Marxist Critique in MacIntyre's Aristotelian Ethics," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 97-111; Paul Blackledge, "Leadership or Management: Some Comments on Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Marx(ism)," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 112-33; Émile Perreau-Saussine, "The Moral Critique of Stalinism," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 134-51; and Neil Davidson, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Trotskyism," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 152-76.
[17] Ruth Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism: MacIntyre, Marx and the Analysis of Abstraction," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 38, no. 8, (2012): 775.

Desmond notes that "[i]n recent centuries perhaps no philosopher has been rejected as often as Hegel."[18] Indeed, whether positive or negative, the continuous responses to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) demonstrate a similarity to Whitehead's famous comment,[19] but with all "modern philosophy [being] a footnote to Hegel."[20] And while any claims of continuity between thinkers necessarily reach a limit at some point, and can only be stretched so far,[21] Hegel's development and expansion of dialectical thought puts any responses to him in an interesting position.

Any rejection, whether from Continental or Analytical traditions,[22] or in the form of critique, reduction, or reversal of his thought,[23] can potentially be seen as an element of *Aufheben*, or the sublation of one moment into another, tracing along the dialectical process of history. Indeed, even Marx, who saw himself as challenging or rejecting Hegel in many ways saw himself to a certain extent as representing just this *Aufheben*. Rather than merely rejecting Hegel, it could be argued that Marx seems to have understood and justified his own position in Hegelian systematic terms, as the proper, dialectically generated refinement and furtherance of Hegel's thought.[24]

So just what were the ideas which so many adopted, rejected, or dialectically developed from Hegel? His work is significant both because it "sums up the criticism of the Enlightenment while at the same time transcending the Enlightenment's limitations, and introduces for the first time the themes which dominate Marxist thinking."[25] Given that MacIntyre's thought is the telos

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[18] William Desmond, "Introduction," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, (ed.) William Desmond, (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), vii.
[19] A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, (ed.) D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherbume, (New York, NY: 1978), 39. "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them."
[20] Mark C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel & Kierkegaard*, (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2000), ix.
[21] For criticisms of Whitehead's claims about Plato, for instance, see Christos C. Evangeliou, "European Philosophy: Simply a Series of Footnotes to Plato?" in *Mediterranean Studies*, 10, (2001): 167-80.
[22] Desmond, "Introduction," xi.
[23] George L. Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, (ed.) William Desmond, (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 5-9
[24] William Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx: The Fetishism of Dialectics," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, (ed.) William Desmond, (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 73; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 29-33.
[25] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7.

of this chapter – and wider work – I will draw on his understanding of the primary contributions of Hegel which represent points of interest for tracing the development of later thought. His work was concerned with the concepts of *alienation* - or '*self-estrangement*' and *objectification*, *recognition* and '*coming into one's own*,' as well as the *dialectic of history* and the eventually the *disconnection between the real and the ideal*.[26] I will proceed to highlight how Hegel developed these concepts as a starting point for Marx's – and later MacIntyre's – responses.

Prior to diving into this, a couple points must be clarified. As Hegel is a sea unto-himself amongst the ocean of philosophy, any description of development of his work will necessarily draw the ire of some particular interpretation of that work. This would not change even if one where to exclusively cite Hegel himself, as put well by Dickey:

> Hegel is a thinker who needs to be read with a discerning commentary alongside – better yet, with several such commentaries alongside. But here a problem arises: that of the interpretative diversity of Hegelian scholarship. … Of late, scholars have proposed to meet this hermeneutical challenge with the battle cry - 'back to the text.' … [However], the argument that informs this approach presumes the 'innocence' of a text … The key assumptions in this strategy are that a thinker's work is an autonomous and self-contained object of inquiry whose meaning, if it is a 'classic,' is 'timeless,' and that, as a classic, it embodies a closed system of inner meaning which requires no outer references to be understood. … this argument is of dubious value, first, because it diverts attention from the historical question of Hegel's relationship to his world, and second because it completely avoids the matter of the existing interpretative diversity of Hegelian scholarship.[27]

This, of course, simply specifies the general comments made in Chapter 1 regarding textual translation,[28] and the fusion of horizons between every text and their interpreter.[29] The following section attempts to walk the knife's edge between becoming lost in Hegel's primary work and relying entirely on secondary literature and being lost to the interpretation of others. While there are some sociological works on Hegel, and many that develop Hegelian thought, much of the work drawn on is philosophical as the argument that Hegel is a figure of sociological concern is moot for the present work. Rather, it is because of the grounding Hegel represents to Marx's later work that I am focusing on him now. Lastly, it could be argued that Hegel's influence is demonstrable

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[26] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7-17.
[27] Laurence Dickey, "Preface," in *Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770-1807*, (New York, NY: University of Cambridge Press, 1989), vii-viii.
[28] See §1.2.(d).
[29] See §1.2.(d) & §1.3.(a)

in the abstract by deploying Taylor's work, a figure who straddles the line between sociology and philosophy himself. His work, *Hegel* (originally published 1975), remains to this day a seminal summary text of many of Hegel's core thoughts, and is drawn on extensively in the following subsections. Despite drawing on this and other secondary works, as noted above, in attempting to represent Hegel I will be attempting to balance between getting lost on either the side of the primary text or the side of the secondary text, and hope this representation remains faithful, intelligible, and useful to this present project.

3.2.(a) Alienation & Objectification

Hegel was one of the first to develop a theory of alienation,[30] conceptualizing it as the phenomenon where the public experience of society ceases to have any meaning for someone:

> alienation arises when the goals, norms or ends which define the common practices or institutions begin to seem irrelevant or even monstrous, or when the norms are redefined so that the practices appear a travesty of them.[31]

This alienation for Hegel, as with most things, is a historical phenomenon, where one experiences social reality as other-than oneself.[32] This phenomenon has occurred many times throughout history as societies change or fall apart, but the paradigm example of this for Hegel was the break-up of the Greek city-states, where Socrates ceased to live by the norms of Athens and instead looked for a rational law outside of the given.[33]

Taylor describes the unalienated life by Hegel's account as exemplified by the Greeks prior to Socrates, where the happy and unalienated life

> is where the norms and ends expressed in the public life of a society are the most important ones by which its members define their identities as human beings. For then the institutional matrix in which they cannot help living is not felt to be foreign. Rather it is the essence, the 'substance' of the self.[34]

The institutions and practices which make up this society serve as *objective spirit*, or the already-there-ness of human community.[35] The objective aspect represented by the social realm is a

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[30] Charles Taylor, "Ethical Substance," in *Hegel*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 381.
[31] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 384.
[32] Charles Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," in *Hegel*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 178.
[33] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 384-85.
[34] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 383.
[35] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 382-83.

necessary part of development of a balanced, rational, and ethical individual for Hegel, as noted in his dialectic engagement between the *subject* (the individual) and the *substance* (the objective, social realm) which he describes in his account of consciousness (discussed below).[36]

The alienation of the individual from the social, at whatever point in history it occurs, tends to spiral in its effect by enabling the (further) rise in individualism, as "when men cease to identify with the community's life, when they 'reflect', [they] turn back on themselves, and see themselves most importantly as individuals with individual goals."[37] However, this turning away from the substance which would seem to derail any Hegelian dialectic actually "lays the groundwork for a recovery of freedom on a higher level."[38] There are two possibilities, however, whenever one experiences alienation. As the

> Basic attitude of alienation is one in which men feel that their substance lies in something outside them, and hence that they can only realize themselves by overcoming their particularity and conforming to this reality. This necessity is felt both by those who willingly accept it and try to act according to it, and by those who resent it and kick against it, what Hegel calls the 'noble' (edelmütig) and 'base' (niederträchtig) consciousnesses respectively.[39]

Hegel argued that "men are formed to overcome" alienation, and that "out of this alienation eventually arises a consciousness which has 'seen through'" it,[40] one which seeks self-knowledge and intersubjective activity:

> Through engagement with a community composed of subjects, the individual subject gradually begins to adopt the norms and customs of this community and to make them its own. Now, rather than simply acting according to its transient and instinctive impulses, the subject regulates its activity according to the values of the community and understands itself according to the role it plays within the community. The individual becomes a stable subject only by integrating itself into a social system. This process of integration is essential for both individual and civilizational development. Without the community to integrate into the individual would never become a self, but would remain merely an incoherent series of

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[36] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977), 58-138.
[37] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 384.
[38] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 178.
[39] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 179.
[40] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 179

> impulses and appetites; without the integrating individual, society would cease to exist.[41]

It is precisely this intersubjective integration which individuals seek which is derailed through the development of alienation, and which individuals seek by their very nature to overcome. The incoherence of the individual can be seen in a range of historical and social psychological accounts of anomie, while the dissolution of society can be seen by the very Greek examples (among other periods of radical historical change) which Hegel gives.

This dialectical procedure is best exemplified by the historical struggles between Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment thought. For Hegel, the Enlightenment was an important historical change, attempting to cast away the shadow of religious uncertainty, representing the

> beginning of the end of alienation in that the realities toward which the piety of alienated consciousness … tries to conform, are cut down to size. All external reality is objectified, deprived of spiritual significance and seen as a world of sensible material things spread out before a universal scientific consciousness.[42]

In response to this, the Absolute, is "reduced to the empty notion of a supreme being" forced to lie outside the world in a deistic fashion, separated from the material realm.[43] Despite this, and despite Hegel's claims about religion representing a "veiled, unclear representation of the truth,"[44] the engagement between Enlightenment critiques and religious counter-arguments represents a dialectic aimed at the overcoming of both the unclarity of religion – including arguably the unclarity of the religious terminology which Hegel was forced to develop from[45] – and the self-centred, atomistic tendencies of Enlightenment thought.[46] In "denouncing the one-sidedness of religion"[47] Enlightenment rationality – dominated by questions of utility and the singular subject[48] - fails to recognize its own one-sidedness.

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[41] Marina F. Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" *Stud East Eur Thought*, 68 (2016): 190-91.
[42] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 179-80.
[43] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 180, see also Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* 411.
[44] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 184, see also Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 412-13.
[45] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7.
[46] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 181-84.
[47] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 184.
[48] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 181-82.

It is clear that from Hegel's engagements with Scottish Enlightenment thinkers that the problems he considered in regard to alienation as a historical phenomenon was not merely an ideal one, but a political and economic one.[49] This provided the perfect location for Marx to pick up from when he in turn described and elaborated on alienation as a social and economic phenomenon,[50] also building upon various Scottish Enlightenment thinkers.[51] Given the repeated historical locating of alienation by Hegel and his commentators, it makes sense now to turn to his account of dialectics, specifically the dialectic of history and the role of *Aufheben* therein.

3.2.(b) The Dialectic of History & Aufheben

Dialectics for Hegel is a process - often framed in the words of Fichte as 'thesis → antithesis → synthesis' – which is at the core of much of his thought, whether on history, consciousness, or rationality.[52] This process is often simplified in Fichte's words, as well as Marx's representation of them, as two entities or phenomena colliding in an oppositional manner, leading to one overtaking the other. But Hegel describes this process in a more complex and nuanced fashion worth elaborating on briefly. Noting how many view any given philosophic system as static, either rejecting or accepting this or that claim, Hegel argues this invalidates the potential for progress, and so claims that:

> The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole.[53]

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[49] Laurence Dickey, "Preface," x-xi. Dickey notes that "Hegel resisted [the Scottish] tendency to treat man as a social being whose nature was essentially economic. So while he admired the Scots for both their socioeconomic objectivism and their materialistic sense of history, he aimed from the start at altering the 'modality' of their arguments, especially those that celebrated the naturalism and materialism of collective life" (xi). Here is one location where the Scottish influence on Hegel and Marx distinctly differs.

[50] Fredric Jameson, "Organizational Problems,'" in *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*, (London, UK: Verso, 2017), 19

[51] See further discussion to this effect in Chapter 4, §4.2.

[52] Johann Gottlieb Fichte & Daniel Breazeale, *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 249; Robert R. Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*, (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 46, n.37.

[53] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 2.

This organic metaphor helps elaborate his conception of dialectics, as a hermeneutic circle capable of directional progress,[54] but which can only be understood as such when viewed in the context of history (whether individual or world-historical).

While differentiating between the subject, and the external substance which makes up its world, Hegel simultaneously intermingles the two, noting that truth is not only substance (a thing in and of the world), but equally is subject (something with agency and an impact on history). This trend can be traced to Kant, who had the insight that human beings partially 'construct' the realities they confront:

> Our understanding must move from the universal to the particular. In respect of the particular, therefore, judgement can recognize no purposiveness, or consequently, pass any determinate judgements, unless it is possessed of a universal law under which it can subsume that particular. But the particular by its very nature contains something contingent in respect to the universal. … it follows that the concept of a purposiveness of nature in its products … is a necessary concept for the human power of judgement … It is, therefore, a subjective principle of reason for the use of judgement, and one which, taken as regulative and not constitutive, is as necessarily valid for our human judgement as if it were an objective principle.[55]

By tying the particularity of human experience and the particularity of nature to universal laws, Kant necessarily intertwines the objective and the subjective in a manner where a better understanding of the universal leads to a better understanding of the specific, and it is the subject who is capable of this understanding – a dialectic not dissimilar to that of Hegel's dialectic between subject and substance. Further to this, Kant argues that "[o]ur understanding is a faculty of concepts" which allows the particularity of life to be brought "under the universal supplied by the concepts of the understanding."[56] This dialectical process for Kant was discursive insofar as it required repeated engagement between the universal and particular through the subject (or reasoner) to allow for understanding of the relation between teleological ends, particular phenomena, and mechanical laws.[57] Despite the apparent discontinuity between mechanical laws and teleological ends, Kant argues that can co-exist under a deeper, *supersensible* principle which

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[54] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 12-13. "[I]t would make not sense to reverse the process, to say that the fruit was *aufgehoben* in the bud or blossom. *Aufgehobung* is an asymmetrical relation: if *a* is *aufgehoben* in *b*, then *b* cannot be aufgehoben in *a*."
[55] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, (trans.) James Creed Meredith, (ed.) Nicholas Walker, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 232.
[56] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 234.
[57] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 234-38.

– while hidden from our ability to understand – allows for the subsumption of mechanical laws of means, to teleological causality of ends,[58] such that "the whole would … be an *effect* or *product* the *representation* of which is looked on as the *cause* of its possibility."[59]

The major flaw in this Kantian influence was the inarticulate metaphysics which explained (or failed to explain) how mechanical laws and teleological ends can interact, and how one can be subordinated to the other. Hegel, on the other hand, was the first to combine this insight with a dynamic historical vision of *how* the sequence of dialectical interplay between whole and part, through the course of human history, reveal a historical directionality. Dialectics describes the mechanism or process by which that occurs:

> The living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actually only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity*, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this self-*restoring* sameness, or this reflection in otherness within itself—not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such—is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as it goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.[60]

In typical Hegelian fashion, the point could perhaps be more clearly stated, but what we see in this is that the dialectical process begins at a point of singularity, which through its negativity, bifurcates into oppositional elements. So, the dialectic begins with a thesis, but it is out of this thesis, through "the doubling which sets up opposition," that points the now internally-differentiated subject (whether human, or more abstract) to seek out the self-restoring sameness of the True. This process is always already ongoing for Hegel, and as such it is not merely the experience of individuals in the development of their consciousnesses (discussed below in more detail), but of the history of individual peoples, and what he calls 'World History' or 'Universal

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[58] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 238-44. Kant allows for the subordination of mechanical laws to teleological ends, noting that "where ends are thought as the sources of the possibility of certain things, means have also to be supposed. Now the law of the efficient causality of a means, considered in its own right, requires nothing that presupposes an end, and consequently, may be both mechanical and yet a subordinate cause of designed effects." (242). However, the co-existence of these processes of reasoning – whether subordinated to each other or separated – requires a "supersensible substrate of nature which is hidden from our view." (243).

[59] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 236, emphasis original.

[60] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10, emphasis original.

History,'[61] which "exhibits the *gradation* in the development of that principle whose substantial *purport* is the consciousness of Freedom."[62] The overcoming of the bifurcation into a new whole, which in turn can itself be bifurcated in a repeating process of dialectical development, is called *Aufheben*, or sublation, as elements of both the 'thesis' and 'antithesis' remain within the 'synthesis,' rather than one defeating the other.[63]

The seemingly teleological element to this dialectic does not lead to some of the assumptions many might make about Hegel's dialectic of history. For instance, it is commonly claimed that history represents a simplistic progression with a clear telos, or an 'End of History,'[64]; rather, there is a provisionality to any given period of time, there is no 'end' to history.[65] It is, as Hegel says, "the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end … having its end also as its beginning."[66] Additionally, the phenomenon of *Aufheben*, whether historically or individually, does not imply inevitable or unidirectional progress – indeed, Hegel's appreciation for failure and contradiction on every level would seem to undermine this understanding.[67] Errors for Hegel are essential to dialectics, they "would be disastrous to do away with, and … can only be sublated … that is, it will continue to exist on the level appropriate to it, but now coordinated with some very different conceptual dynamics."[68] This, again, can take place on the individual and historical level. While the teleological nature of Hegel's account of history (*qua* there being an 'End of History' or not) is a point of debate, it is clear that directionality was being traced *backwards* through history by Hegel's account (see discussion below).

This dialectic represents the 'motor force of history' through the errors, contradictions, and bifurcations between

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[61] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, (Buffalo, NY: Promethius Books, 1991), 4.
[62] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 56, emphasis original.
[63] Rather than A → B = C, Hegel argues that *out of* +A comes -A, the struggle between which results in A (a sublimation of +A & -A).
[64] See for instance Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006).
[65] Fredric Jameson, "Revolution and the 'End of History,'" in *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*, (London, UK: Verso, 2017), 113.
[66] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10.
[67] Fredric Jameson, "Organizational Problems,'" in *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*, (London, UK: Verso, 2017), 20.
[68] Jameson, "Organizational Problems," 18.

> the external reality and what it is meant to realize. The contradiction eventually brings any given form to dissolution. But the particular nature of the contradiction in this form determines the outcome, and hence from the collapse of the first form another specific one arises. Having resolved the contradiction of its predecessor, it falls victim to its own, and so on through the whole of history. In this way history shows a dialectical movement.[69]

This dialectical movement, and any 'progress' which can be attached to it, can only be viewed retrospectively, as in "actual existence Progress appears as an advancing from the imperfect to the more perfect; but the former must not be understood abstractly as *only* the imperfect, but as something which involves the very opposite of itself—the so-called perfect—as a *germ* or impulse. So—reflectively, at least—*possibility* points to something destined becoming real."[70] In this movement of history, Hegel identifies *Geist*, or spirit.

Despite *Geist* being described as the "Idea of Freedom," and the "absolute goal of history,"[71] and even as the divine by some, its frequent religious interpretations have been frequently challenged,[72] with it being described as a 'yet-to-be actualized telos,' an 'indeterminate manifestation,' synonymous with freedom, and something distinct from religion.[73] While human reality is both social and historical, and "comprised of conscious individual agents freely acting of their own wills. Yet it cannot be achieved by the single action of any one of its members. It transcends while including the original self-consciousness."[74] *Geist* is thus

> not an a priori principle but rather a result of human intersubjective interaction. The real agent acting in the world is the human individual in mutual interactions with others. The world is then opened to us as the object and context of our own desire for and striving towards self-realization. The universality of Spirit is only the expression of the historical character of human life and the processes in which we human beings participate.[75]

The dialectic of history cannot be understood in isolated moments, but through the context of the whole, which lives out through individual moments.[76] In other words, dialectics is the mode in

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[69] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 390-91
[70] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 57, emphasis original.
[71] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 23.
[72] Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" 182.
[73] Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" 184.
[74] Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" 187.
[75] Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" 189.
[76] Theodor W. Adorno, "Skoteinos, or How to Read Hegel," in *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 91

which *society* develops, in a particular direction, and as a tendency that exceeds the consciousness and will of any particular individual or group. This represents one of the clear proto-sociological insights Hegel provided as a starting point for Marx. Only in this way can progress be recognized. This progress towards freedom as Hegel understands it is not necessarily a happy one, indeed harmony is often evidence of periods of non-dialectical development,[77] while the realization of freedom necessitates often confusing and unpleasant action to translate the "universal latent principle … into the domain of objectivity."[78]

Teetering on the border between the objective and subjective, Hegel smashed this perceived border by necessitating the intermingling of each for world history to proceed. Bykova words it well, noting that

> World history, for Hegel, is … the result of the gradual development of human self-awareness and self-realization, which comes about as the result of the mutual recognition of individual human subjects. This mutual recognition not only allows the individual subject to break out of a sort of impulsive and unreflective selfishness and to begin comporting himself in accordance with objective behavioral norms, but it also allows for communication, cooperation, and social organization, which mark the beginning of human historical development. Both individual self-consciousness and human cultural development are dependent upon this on-going process of intersubjective recognition. Hegel designates both the individual-subjective and the social-objective developments that result from intersubjective recognition as aspects of *Geist*.[79]

This development of history aims toward what Hegel calls Absolute Knowledge - or the self, aware of its own historicity[80] - tying the individual to the consequences of multiple individual and group-dependent actions, which in turn are tied to the historical moment.[81] This dialectical and historical process not only represents an initial sounding board for Marx's methodology, but also provides elements which came to be influential in sociology more generally outside of Marx, including the breaking down of history into distinct 'periods of development' which was common among many classical sociologists including Weber, Durkheim, and Spencer. Hegel's influence in the social

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[77] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 26-27.
[78] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 27.
[79] Bykova, "What is Wrong with the Divine Interpretation of Geist in Hegel?" 190.
[80] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 479-93; Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 56.
[81] For another account of the importance of human agency and the importance of the freedom of the subject for Hegel, see Ardis B. Collins, "Commentary on 'Hegel and the Problem of Difference,'," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, (ed.) William Desmond, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 54.

and historical intertangling of the individual can also be seen in the development of wider recognition theory across a range of frameworks (feminist, critical race theory, etc.), as well as later interactionist theories of Mead, Goffman, and Schutz, and the comparative work of Simmel.[82]

MacIntyre as well responds to Hegel's account of history, and while he rejects Hegel's account of the Absolute,[83] he recognizes the value in Hegel's account of historical development and potential comparative understanding.[84] Indeed, building on the Hegelian understanding of history we can see an Aristotelian development in MacIntyre, who notes that deduction cannot take place in the exercise of *phronēsis*: "It is always as if the rational agent's judgment and action were the conclusion of a chain of reasoning whose first premise was 'Since *the* good and *the* best is such and such…' But it is only in retrospect that our actions can be understood in this way."[85] This retrospective historicity bears distinctly Hegelian markings. Further to this, MacIntyre's account of agency necessitates an account of history which draws on Hegel and an account of ends influenced by both Aristotle and Hegel:

> Agency is exercised through time. To be an agent is not to engage in a series of discrete, unconnected actions. It is to pursue ends, some closer at hand in time, some more remote, some to be achieved for their own sake, some for the sake of furthering some further end, and some for both. And to pass from youth through middle age towards death characteristically involves changes in and revisions of one's ends. Furthermore the ends that one pursues through sometimes extended periods of time are often not only one's own, but are ends shared with others, ends to be achieved only through the continuing cooperation of others or ends that are constituted by the ongoing participation of others.[86]

From this wider picture of the historical, it makes sense to shift now to Hegel's account of individual recognition and the development of self-consciousness as a means of tracing the dialectic between the universal and the particular of human will.[87]

3.2.(c) Recognition & Coming into One's Own

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[82] Further influenced on recognition theory and interactionist theory can be seen in §3.2.(c) below.
[83] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 85.
[84] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84-85.
[85] MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against some Modern Aristotelians," 37, emphasis original.
[86] MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" 100. For further discussion of human agency and selfhood, see Chapter 2, §2.4 and §2.7.
[87] Leslie A. Mulholland, "Hegel and Marx on the Human Individual," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, ed. William Desmond, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 61-62.

Hegel's dialectical approach was one which impacted all 'levels of analysis' in his work, from the universal and historical, all the way down to the individual. And as history is enacted through the individual, it is important to make sense of how Hegel's dialectic impacted the development of individual *self-consciousness*, and the role *recognition* plays in this. While Hegel notes alienation as a largely social and historical phenomenon, it is through the constant desire for recognition that individuals seek and move towards disalienation,[88] and in this manner continues the dialectic movement of *Geist* throughout human history, often by providing a means for critique of the "ethical institutions and practices [which] can be *impediments* to the achievement of recognition."[89]

This process begins from a sort of abstract instantiation of *how* consciousness develops,[90] the *necessary social elements* in this development, and the *ethical implications* and consequences of this development. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel lays out a process of development which moves from what he calls 'sense-certainty,' to 'perception,' to 'consciousness,' and finally to 'self-consciousness.'[91] Starting from a somewhat 'naïve realist' position with 'sense-certainty,' or the recognition of something which "is … whether it is known or not; and … remains, even if it is not known, whereas there is no knowledge if the object is not there,"[92] Hegel proceeds to turn towards the question of the 'I' which is the one capable of sensing in the first place. While 'sense-

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[88] Jameson, "Revolution and the 'End of History,'" 113.
[89] Timothy L. Brownlee, "Ethicality and the Movement of Recognition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*," in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 56, no. 2 (June 2016): 188-89, emphasis original.
[90] Useful for making sense of this is Weber's concept of 'ideal-types.' See Max Weber, *Sociological Writings*, Ed. W. Hydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 263-66. Ideal types are generalized examples of a thing for the heuristic purpose of making intelligible the similarities (and differences) between things and make possible the categorization of things in an otherwise infinitely variable world. To help avoid getting stuck in the potential metaphysical or theological interpretations of Hegel it may be of use to view the progression of consciousness he lays out in the *Phenomenology* as being an *ideal-typical* construct in the tradition of Weber, insofar as Hegel is describing the *general process* of consciousness, not, say, the actual process of consciousness encountered by the first human to walk upright or some such similar example. To draw specifically from Weber: "[a]n ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present, and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia. Historical research faces the task of determining, in each individual case, the extent to which this ideal-construct approximates to or diverges from reality … in order to "characterize" [anything, one] must use concepts which are precisely an unambiguously definable only in the form of ideal types. Or are concepts such as "individualism," "imperialism," "feudalism," "mercantilism," "conventional," etc., and innumerable concepts of like character … constructed substantively by the "presuppositionless" description of some concrete phenomenon, or through the abstract synthesis of those traits which are common to numerous concrete phenomena?"
[91] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 58-138.
[92] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 59.

certainty' is merely something that *happens to us*, 'perception' is something *we actively take in*.[93] This also introduces the ongoing dialectic which plays a role in the development of consciousness, a dialectic presented here between the act of perceiving (or the 'I' which perceives), and the object perceived.[94] This dialectic paves the way to consciousness, as it is through the recognition of the truth or untruth occurring within perception that consciousness is first able to reflect somewhat into itself, through the recognition of this dialectic.[95] Many of these concepts and their interrelated nature prefigures later sociological traditions, especially interactionist thought. As one example, despite the fact that George Herbert Mead only mentions Hegel once in the entirety of *Mind, Self, & Society*,[96] the parallels between Hegel and Mead include accounts of the interpretation of history,[97] the role of the 'universal' in expanding the 'specific,'[98] the importance of realizing shared experience in others for the development of a fully articulated self,[99] the ethical essentiality of the social,[100] and the differentiated and tiered account of dialectical the development of self-consciousness,[101] as both a means overcoming the Cartesian *cogito*, and as a necessary path of human development.[102]

Continuing his dialectic of consciousness, Hegel also introduces the ideas of 'being-for-self,' and 'being-for-another' to help encapsulate the way that an individual - an 'I' - interacts with

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[93] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 67, 86. The active apprehension of objects is one part of a twofold experience – apprehension and understanding. As the character of objects are not clear "immediately for consciousness" but rather represent a "mediated relation to the inner being" of the object which requires not just apprehension but understanding, which "*looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of things*." (86, emphasis in original).
[94] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 67.
[95] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 72.
[96] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society: The Definitive Edition*, ed. Charles W. Morris, Daniel R. Huebner, and Hans Joas, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 300. Mead only directly mentions Hegel once (in an off-handed manner) throughout the breadth of this famous work. Despite this, he is clearly aware enough of Hegel to write further about him (albeit only once). See, George Herbert Mead, "A New Criticism of Hegelianism: Is It Valid?" in *American Journal of Theology* 5, (1910): 87-96, for his only major work which explicitly engages with Hegel.
[97] George Herbert Mead, *The Philosophy of the Present*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 42-43; Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, 256; Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 63.
[98] Mead, *Mead, Mind, Self & Society*, 7-8.
[99] Mead, *Mead, Mind, Self & Society*, 1.
[100] Charles W. Morris, "Introduction," in *Mind, Self & Society: The Definitive Edition*, ed. Charles W. Morris, Daniel R. Huebner, and Hans Joas, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), xl-xli.
[101] See especially the dialectic between the developing self and the generalized other, the necessity for objectification of the self, and the movement between the 'I' and the 'me.' Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, 82, 154-56, 154, fn.7, 164, 172-78, 192-200, 209-13.
[102] Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*, 131, fn. 35; 136-37.

objects and others, and comes to *internally understand* that interaction.[103] It is only through this capacity for internal understanding that *self*-consciousness becomes possible. However, Hegel argues that initialization of this self-consciousness is *only* fully possible through the existence of, and conscious interaction with, an 'other.'[104] This interaction takes initial form through what has commonly come to be called the 'master-slave' dialectic, a struggle between two consciousnesses in a sort of abstract 'state of nature.'[105] Noting that self-consciousness "exists in and for itself when … it so exists for another; that is, *it exist only in being acknowledged*,"[106] Hegel presents this as a struggle for *recognition*. Still being presented in a sort of primordial fashion,[107] this is a struggle in which each consciousness seeks the death of the other insofar as they (the 'I' in this instance) have yet to meet anything which they recognize as another consciousness, and thus seek to remake the world like it was prior to an 'other' agentively trying to impose themselves.[108] This process would involve a recognition of themselves *in* another – a recognition of the other aside from, and in addition to, a recognition of one's own self in a larger social context.[109] Hegel claims that initially this life-and-death struggle results not in the telos of *mutual recognition*, but rather either in the death, or submission, of one consciousness to the other. This results in an *independent*

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[103] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 80.
[104] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 104-10.
[105] The goal of Hegel's work in the *Phenomenology*, the method by which he attempts to achieve that goal, how the *Phenomenology* fits within his wider corpus, and how to interpret all of these considerations are all hotly contested topics to this day across a range of disciplines. Indeed, whether Hegel had any clearly defined goal and consistent method at all is one of the core questions among these debates. Michael N. Forster's *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit* (1998) and Robert Pippin's *Hegel's Idealism* (1989) present contrasting, but sympathetic, views on this, while Walter Kaufmann's *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (1965) rejects it. Attempts to solidify an interpretation have taken place within phenomenology, with Martin Heidegger's *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (1970) and Jean Hyppolite's *Genesis and Structure in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (1974). Within critical theory, there is Theodor Adorno's *Hegel: Three Studies* (1963) and Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (1954). From a neo-Kantian epistemology there is Werner Marx's *Hegel's Phenomenology: Its Point and Purpose* (1975). Gillian Rose's *Hegel Contra Sociology* (1981), Alexandre Kojève and Raymond Queneau's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (1969), Charles Taylor's *Hegel* (1975) and Frederic Jameson's *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit* (2017) have all proved as well to be influential interpretations throughout the years. More focused questions on the Phenomenology and its interpretation include how Hegel deploys the ideas of *Geist* (Wilford, 2019; Bykova, 2016) and Absolute Knowledge (Kain, 1998), questions around the intertwining roles of recognition, ethicality, and forgiveness (Wilford, 2019; Brownlee, 2016), and how Hegel's interpretation of history impacts the rest of his work (Bykova, 2016; Jameson, 2017; Buck-Morss, 2009) to name only a few. Needless to say, these are debates larger than the breadth of this work, and a much narrower engagement must be followed for this reason.
[106] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111, emphasis added.
[107] Brownlee, "Ethicality and the Movement of Recognition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*," 187-201. Considerations of the primordial or pre-social aspects of Hegel's starting-point for consciousness and recognition are taken up by Brownlee in his coverage of the role of ethicality, or *Sittlichkeit*, in the *Phenomenology*.
[108] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 113.
[109] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 113-14.

consciousness which only exists *for* itself - having yet to recognize any others *as consciousnesses* - and a *dependent* consciousness whose "essential nature is simply to live or to be for another."[110] In such an arrangement, it is actually the dependent consciousness which has become self-conscious through this *forced* being-for-another.[111] This, however, is a selfhood which is defined *in opposition* to another, resulting in a "recognition that is one-sided and unequal."[112] This bastardization of the end of mutual recognition offers both a theoretical starting point for many historical circumstances of inequality, and embeds an ethical framework within an account of consciousness which precludes a development of 'self,' without a coexistent recognition of 'other' as a 'self' in their own right.

What then *is* recognition for Hegel? It is the acting upon the realization of the *other's* self-consciousness as being necessary for the development of one's *own* self-consciousness, entwined with the ethical embeddedness that relationship puts us in towards the other. It is a synthesis between the epistemological, the ontological, and the ethical – it entails the moment of realization, the practical necessity for that realization, and the actions which necessarily ought to follow it if the end of mutual recognition is ever to be possible. It links the human agent to both the social world around us, as well as to the rational development of self-consciousness. It necessarily ties the issues of description and prescription together in the development of human awareness of our own humanity, and in so doing represents what might be accurately labelled as *both* a means to an end and an end in its own right,[113] in keeping with Hegel's claim that "[i]t is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual."[114]

While recognition theory and questions of ethical self-consciousness have been taken up by many later, and even anti-Hegelian, thinkers.[115] Those influenced by such Hegelian

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[110] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 115.
[111] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 115-16. Here we see the seed of what would later be developed into DuBois' 'double-consciousness,' and Marx's understanding of differential standpoints between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.
[112] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 116.
[113] Philip J. Kain, "The Structure and Method of Hegel's *Phenomenology*," *Clio*, 27, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 602-8. This is in keeping with Kain's understanding of the Kantian basis for Hegel's arguments in the first several chapters of the *Phenomenology*.
[114] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10.
[115] To see how Hegel and Recognition have been deployed under the categories of Critical Race, Postcolonial, and Indigenous theory for instance, see: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, (New York,

considerations include many within the horizon of sociological thought like Frantz Fanon, Glen Sean Coulthard, Axel Honneth, Susan Buck-Morss, Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Paul Gilroy, and Orlando Patterson to name a few. MacIntyre likewise has been influenced by questions of self-consciousness and recognition, having noted the centrality of others and the shared recognition of standards of truth, rationality, or logic in the interactional and reflective process of thought.[116] In addition, we see MacIntyre's interest in the role played between First Person and Third Person interaction in his understanding of the self,[117] as well as his elaboration that there is *more* to the individual self than the roles we fill.[118] We can also see the historical considerations of Hegel's account of selfhood present in MacIntyre, who – distinguishing between Shakespeare and Descartes – argues that

> Shakespeare invites us to reflect on the crisis of the self as a crisis of the tradition which has formed the self; Descartes by his attitude to history and to fable has cut himself off from the possibility of recognizing himself; he has invented an

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NY: Grove Press, 2008); Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004); Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 97-101, 334-42; Sherene H. Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*, (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2014); Paul Gilroy, "'Cheery the Weary Traveller': W. E. B. DuBois, Germany, and the Politics of (Dis)placement." In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 111-145; W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," In *The Souls of Black Folk*, (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2008); W.E.B. DuBois, "The Propaganda of History," In *Black Reconstruction in America*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1998), 711-29; Glen Sean Coulthard, "Resentment and Indigenous Politics," in *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*. Ed. Patrick Wolfe, (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA American Indian Studies Centre, 2016); Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014). Under the categories of Feminist theory, see: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley, (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1974), 448, 476, 813; Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), 52; Kimberly Hutchens, "Knowing Thyself: Hegel, Feminism and an Ethics of Heteronomy," in *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought: Beyond Antigone?* Ed. Kimberly Hutchens and Tuija Pulkkinen, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 87-103; Judith Butler, "Longing for Recognition," in *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought: Beyond Antigone?* 109-27; Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. Joel Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke, (London, UK: Verso, 2003), 7; Nancy Fraser, "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice," in *Studies in Social Justice*, 1, no. 1 (Winter, 2007): 23-35. And for 3rd Generation Frankfurt School theory see Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. Joel Anderson, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005); Axel Honneth, *The I In We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*, trans. Joseph Ganahl, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012).

[116] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176-77.

[117] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 153, 157-62.

[118] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 190, see also his critique of compartmentalization, 196-99, and the divided self which can result from this, 200-204.

> unhistorical self-endorsed self-consciousness and tries to describe his epistemological crisis in terms of it. Small wonder that he misdescribes it.[119]

It is precisely the historical considerations which Hegel used to challenge Descartes which MacIntyre uses to ground his account of traditions as the context within which, like Shakespeare, he claims the self is narratively formed.

The practical rational element of the self which leads to moral agency is also a central concern for MacIntyre[120] – a rationality whose practicality is *interactional* in the same manner as the recognition described by Hegel in the development of self-consciousness – and the "[a]ccountability to particular others, participation in critical practical enquiry, and acknowledgement of the individuality both of others and of oneself … [which marks] the social relationships and mode of self-understanding which characterize the moral agent."[121] Here, too, we can see both the influences of Aristotle and Hegel, with the question of moral agency undergirded by the virtues, embedded in a Hegelian history, which recognizes both the retrospective nature of the development of these virtues but also in the *potential overcoming* of the standards and normative frameworks by which agents make decisions.[122] To avoid going down a rabbit-hole of recognition, however, it makes sense now to move to our final Hegelian consideration.

3.2.(d) The Real vs. the Ideal

Despite the seemingly liberatory elements of Hegel's thought,[123] for every comment such as "[s]lavery is in and for itself *injustice*, for the essence of humanity is *Freedom…*"[124] we have parallel comments like "…but for this man must be matured. The gradual abolition of slavery is

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[119] MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises and Dramatic Narrative," 10.
[120] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 190-91.
[121] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 192.
[122] MacIntyre, "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency," 189. "That human beings have by their specific nature a capacity for recognizing that they have good reason to acknowledge the authority of evaluative and normative standards that are independent of those embodied in their own particular social and cultural order, and so share equally in a capacity to be able to transcend in thought the limitations of those established standards, has been a widely held doctrine. Disagreements about what such evaluative and normative standards prescribe and what awareness of their authority consists in have no precluded widespread agreement in ascribing to normal adult human beings a capacity that makes them responsible as individuals for not putting their established social and cultural order in question, if and when they have occasion to do so." See also MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 76-77, 83, 85.
[123] Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).
[124] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 99, emphasis original.

therefore wiser and more equitable than its sudden removal."[125] Despite his claims about progress, and the role of the individual in the living out of history and its changes, Hegel was hesitant to develop a theory of action followed up by a *politics* of action. His accounts of historical progress largely seem retrospective,[126] with the idea that his "world-historical individuals have already lived and acted, [that] they belong to the world-historical *past*,"[127] and history passing faster than knowledge can form with the "owl of Minerva [beginning] its flight only with the onset of dusk."[128] Even within Hegel's attempts to realize ethical norms, which can only be "discovered in the real,"[129] and are in turn necessarily rational, or to establish the Absolute in the here and now, [130] we are "to turn away from chimaeric attempts to construct a new society from a blue-print."[131] This raises the common question by post-Hegelian thinkers, including, but not limited to, Marx, about how applicable Hegel's philosophical work was to the material realm of 'the real.'

While on the one hand, Hegel appears to hold a position of simply stepping back and letting things happen.[132] On the other hand, his ethical and epistemological claims can be divided such that despite only being able to make knowledgeable claims about history *post hoc*, this does not preclude directed ethical action of an individual subject. It simply implies that the consequences of those actions cannot be known *a priori*. Some have argued that Hegel is in fact more materialist or realist than many (especially Marx) have taken him to be,[133] with some going so far as to claim that "Hegel's logic is the algebra of the revolution."[134] It has also been argued that Marx was not

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[125] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 99. Whether such a claim would be something the later deployer of Hegel, Frantz Fanon (2008: 191-97), would agree with is an interesting subject of debate, as he critiques the simple and sudden freeing of slaves, as it 'short-circuits' the struggle for recognition, but he likely would not be in favour of a slow granting of rights across, say, generations. What Hegel means by 'gradual' would make for an interesting debate outside the realm of the current work.
[126] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 57.
[127] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 3, emphasis original; see also 6-8.
[128] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right Or Natural Law and Political Science in Outline*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23.
[129] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 383
[130] Taylor, "The Formation of Spirit," 185
[131] Taylor, "Ethical Substance," 383
[132] William Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, ed. William Desmond, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 75. "[P]hilosophy cannot give 'instruction,' it cannot provide us with a recipe for making the world what it ought to be, and it must be silent as to the future course of history. The task of the philosopher is not to direct action, but to provide comprehension and understanding of the real to the extent to which it is rational."
[133] William Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx," 84-85.
[134] Herzen, as cited by MacIntyre, "The Algebra of the Revolution," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 41.

as materialist as he represented himself.[135] In addition, Hegel's seemingly retrospective historical views do not necessarily imply that Hegel cannot be directed towards the future (albeit in a shorter-term than, say, Marx or Nietzsche),[136] and indeed that his dialectical philosophy provides a much more nuanced and flexible account of "historical improvements and historical worsenings" than such large-scale accounts of the *longue durée*.[137] Indeed, Hegel's seemingly conservative account of history avoids the problematics of Marx's treatment of the future "as a substitute for God and transcendence of any kind,"[138] which when it fails to arrive, causes Marxists to claim that the "delays are simply longer than was imagined and … one day, far away in the future, the end will justify all."[139] While he may not be the 'reactionary legend' that some have made him out to be,[140] MacIntyre, following Marx, claimed that "Hegel's idealism divorces him from the actuality of history."[141] As we have seen, Hegel seems to be much less clear-cut in his division between the real and ideal than many claim, so how does he still fall into the category of an idealist divorced from reality?

MacIntyre gives a good account of what is meant by idealism when speaking about Hegel, noting that

> By his idealism I mean his dependence on his own basic concepts and his substitution of a conceptual system for the material reality of nature and history. History becomes for the mature Hegel merely a manifestation of the idea, of reason at work. This confusion of the real and the ideal, of what is and of what in Hegelian terms ought to be, led Hegel to identify the Prussian state of his day with the most complete expression to date of the ideal state of which his system spoke.[142]

This, of course, demonstrates a problem with Hegel's imposition of the ideal onto the real: despite the flexibility of his system of accounting for the *past*, the *present* will always appear to be the 'most progressive' point in history. This is something which Marx to a certain extent adopted,

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[135] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 2; MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken," 224-25.
[136] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 9.
[137] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 12.
[138] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 25.
[139] Camus, as cited by Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 25.
[140] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7.
[141] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 15.
[142] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 15-16.

especially in his noting the importance of the bourgeoisie in industrializing the modern world as a necessary element for the overcoming of capitalism.[143]

A common critique of Hegel regards the degree to which he (fails to) turn his historicism back upon his own position, not taking his historical concern to include his own thinking. MacIntyre notes this clearly by arguing that

> What distorts Hegel's thinking is his refusal to make his thought conform to historical reality. Hegel seeks to deliver man by right thinking, but he claims for thinking a false autonomy. Man as thinker is not autonomous: he belongs to a material world, from which his thinking arises. Hegel forgot what Kierkegaard remembered when Kierkegaard said that the tragedy of the speculative philosopher is that he must turn aside from his place as a spectator of time and eternity in order to sneeze.[144]

While Hegel certainly attempts to recognize the problematics of historical analysis and the impact on the individual who is making the analyses in question,[145] he still attempts to overcome this by striving towards an historical telos where the real and the ideal have become one. Despite what some critics might say about the 'historicization of Hegel,'[146] if one is to take Hegel beyond himself, to – much like Marx was to do – apply Hegel's thought in an immanent critique which carried the dialectic beyond Hegel,[147] it would have to be recognized that 19th Century Prussia was no more the 'End of History' than today, (a point MacIntyre makes in his own account of progress).[148] Despite his critique of Marx through the use of historical traditions as a means of

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[143] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 72-73, Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.) Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 206-9, 217; Eugene Kamenka, "'Wading Through Economic Filth': Economic Writings, 1857-1867 [Editor's Note]," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.) Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 369-70; Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 57.

[144] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 16-17.

[145] Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 7-11. Hegel identifies that ideas are often imposed upon records, and notes that "Even the ordinary, the 'impartial' historiographer, who believes and professes that he maintains a simply receptive attitude; surrendering himself only to the data supplied him—is by no means passive as regards the exercise of his thinking powers. He brings his categories with him, and sees the phenomena presented to his mental vision, exclusively through these media." (11).

[146] Richard Dien Winfield, "Hegel Versus the New Orthodoxy," in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, ed. William Desmond, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989); Drucilla Cornell, "Commentary on 'Hegel Versus the New Orthodoxy,'" in *Hegel & His Critics: Philosophy in the Aftermath of Hegel*, ed. William Desmond, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

[147] Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx," 73, 77.

[148] Kruger, "MacIntyre's Mean," 63.

critiquing the present (and ideas of the future or lack thereof),[149] MacIntyre takes up the hopefulness of Marx and the historical groundedness of Hegel and deploys them in a "Utopianism of the present,"[150] itself demonstrating Aristotle's contributions to the dialectic of MacIntyre's thought.

Having summed up Hegel's dialectics, their deployment on the historical and individual level, along with his idealistic thought about rationality and *Geist,* and the rather messy and unclear position it leaves him in in relation to many other thinkers, it makes sense to finish here before being trapped forever in the "the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning."[151] From here we will turn to the critiques, developments, and rejections of this figure who "both sums up the criticism of the Enlightenment while at the same time transcending the Enlightenment's limitations, [introducing] for the first time the themes which dominate Marxist thinking"[152] by turning from Hegel to Marx.

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[149] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*.
[150] Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary: Ethics, Resistance, and Utopia," *Philosophy of Management*, 7, no. 1, (2008): 5. See further discussion of this below in §4.4.(c).
[151] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10.
[152] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 7.

Chapter 4: Tracing the Marxian Elements of the Mature MacIntyre

4.1. Marx and Sociology

Marx's move from the apparent idealism of Hegel and his contemporaries helped to lay the groundwork for much of early and contemporary sociology. His rejection of the *perceived* atomism inherent in Hegel's account of consciousness in favour of a socially and historically situated and interconnected account of human development was taken up by many sociologists to come. This trend – towards social-historical situatedness – is one which has been carried into sociology, with the social construction of 'this' or 'that' phenomenon coming to be one of the most abused dead horses of contemporary sociology, being assumed *a priori*. Marx's focus on the urbanism developing since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution was a theme taken up by many early sociologists,[1] and his position that the loss of community was a consequence of capitalism provided a sounding board for other sociological takes by the likes of Tönnies and others.[2] The focus on power as a materially impacted and impactful social phenomena, as noted by Marx on an individual and historical level, was massively influential for later sociologists,[3] as too was the influence of the study of class, which "lay the basis of the central conflict among sociologists … with Tocqueville at one point on the continuum and Marx at the other."[4] The development of alienation by Marx,[5] while distinct from similar concepts taken up by the likes of Tocqueville, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel, was "the principle channel by which the word itself has reached twentieth century writing."[6] While the same can be said about much of Marx's work and its wider influence on sociology, of equal interest to us now is the parallel influence of Marx on MacIntyre, who – I will argue – is drawn closer to contemporary sociology through his early Marxist work and his continued Marxian themes.

These reasons are core to proceeding with analyzing Marx as a sociological theorist. Indeed, it is largely through Marx that sociologists have gained access to Hegelian themes. While the Frankfurt School and other more recent Hegelian-Marxist elements within contemporary social

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[1] Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1966), 29.
[2] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 78.
[3] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 132-41.
[4] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 176, see also 200-208.
[5] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 284-92.
[6] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 264.

theory have broadened sociological engagement with Hegel, much of sociological engagement with Hegel has been either subtly taken place *in absentia* through Marx or has been largely ignored. It is entirely possible that without Marx, Hegel would have been relegated to the dusty realm of philosophy, never to see the light of sociological applicability. Despite this, it is important that Marx is seen as a figure in dialectical engagement with Hegel, and that Hegel represents a theorist of sociological import in their own regard.

In addition to Hegel's value to sociology of his own accord, this Hegelian influence, traced through Marx, is also the measure by which I have chosen to delimit my engagement with Marxian concepts. Rather than arbitrarily picking ideas which Marx engages with, the framework for this chapter's engagement with Marx will proceed according to Marx's engagement with Hegel – the ideas which Marx rejected, accepted, and adapted from him. This serves both the purpose of historical continuity in tracing Hegel's influence upon contemporary sociology and tracing the Hegelian influence on MacIntyre.

4.2. Shared Enlightenment Influences

Given that both Hegel and Marx were influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment[7] – which also represents a shared point of departure for the later MacIntyre[8] – this seems a good point to briefly highlight elements of this historical phenomenon to better ground our turn to Marx. While the 'starting point' of any historical period is always debatable, the Scottish Enlightenment was certainly catalyzed, at least in part, by the shift from regents teaching in universities to professors who specialized in their respective fields in 1709.[9] This allowed for deeper engagement with questions of philosophy, politics, and economics across an already widely established Scottish educational system which had aimed to establish a school in every parish, and which had five established universities[10] (to England's two at the time).[11] Out of this educational milieu came many famous thinkers, including many poets such as Robbie Burns, historians like Thomas Carlyle, philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson, individuals who straddled history and

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[7] Dickey, "Preface," x-xi; Laurence Dickey, "Hegel Discovers the Economy," In *Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770-1807,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 192-99.
[8] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 209-59.
[9] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 237.
[10] Macintyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 220.
[11] R. Anderson, "The History of Scottish Education Pre-1980", in *Scottish Education: Post-Devolution*, (eds.). T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 219–28.

philosophy like David Hume, political economists like James Mill and Adam Smith, and indeed, proto-sociologists like Adam Ferguson.[12] Adam Smith is of particular importance given his impact on both Hegel and Marx,[13] specifically his account of the capitalist system, which was as much an account of how it 'did run,' as of how it 'ought to run,' with Smith identifying both the 'invisible hand' of the market,[14] the means of efficient market expansion through competition[15] and the division of labour,[16] while also critiquing the domination of large corporations,[17] and seeking both education for all[18] and economic relief for the poor.[19] This concern for others was clear from Smith's earlier work on moral theory, where he noted that "to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature."[20] This moral concern is also demonstrated as a concern as to the possible consequences of the capitalist system Smith analyzed in his later work.[21] From this it can be seen that both the economic *and* moral aspects of Smith (especially regarding the corruption of our moral sentiments towards the desire for "wealth and greatness" rather than "wisdom and the

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[12] Whose deployment of Smith to further critique capitalism was influence also on both Hegel and Marx. See David Kettler, "Introduction to the Transaction Version," in *Adam Ferguson: His Social and Political Thought*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), xi-xvi; "Introduction," in *Adam Ferguson: His Social and Political Thought*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 4-5, 8-9, "Afterword," in *Adam Ferguson: His Social and Political Thought*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 317-18.

[13] Evidenced by his frequent and in-depth engagement. See Karl Marx, "Former Discussion of the Subject," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 859-884, & Karl Marx, "Simple Reproduction," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 924-27.

[14] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (ed.). Edwin Cannan, (New York, NY: Bantam Dell), 572.

[15] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 569-70.

[16] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 9.

[17] Alan B. Krueger, "Introduction," in *The Wealth of Nations*, (ed.). Edwin Cannan, (New York, NY: Bantam Dell), xii.

[18] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 986-94.

[19] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 110-11, 195.

[20] Adam Smith, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," in *Classical Sociological Theory*, (eds.). C. Calhoun, J. Gerteis, J. Moody, S. Pfaff, and I. Virk, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2012), 75.

[21] See for instance Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 987-88, where he identifies something which Ford would later cheer as effective, and Marx critique as alienating: that the division of labour leads to confining the majority of people to "a few very simple operations" which tend to destroy "intellectual, social, and marital virtues unless government[s] [take] pains to prevent it," a phenomenon which ought to be countered by public investment in education. Elsewhere Smith notes that even in a country as rich as it is possible to be, only the most wealthy should be able to live off the interest from their profits (134), and where possible, wages of the "different employments of labour … must, in the same neighbourhood, be either perfectly equal or continually tending to equality (138). Further to this, Smith notes that monopolies are the "enemy of good management" (203) which "discourage[s] the improvement of land" (777). All claims which represent a mix of moral and economic concerns.

practice of virtue"[22]) are taken up by Marx. This also demonstrates a shared point of departure between Marx and MacIntyre which will be discussed below.

The debates about Marx's applicability within the tradition of sociology remain to this day, with Jessop describing him as 'pre-disciplinary' at best,[23] and Bailey & Gayle recognizing that such a claim requires justification as he is "often classified as a philosopher," but then noting that this is "a term not unusual for several other classical sociologists."[24] Bailey & Gayle go on to note that in "placing Marx within the domain of sociology, we emphasize Marx the dialectician," who shifted the focus of Hegel to the material and social worlds.[25]

While it is certainly still debated the extent to which Hegel was, for lack of a better word, an anti-materialist - as noted at the end of §3.2.(d) – Marx certainly took 'the material' as the direction in which he sought to deploy many of Hegel's concepts, especially alienation and dialectics. To best demonstrate this, and how it lead to the sociological adoption of Marx, it seems best to briefly engage several of Marx's seminal works, especially those which draw from (or reject) Hegel, and aim towards the 'science' of historical materialism.

4.3. Marx's Responses to Hegel

While it has been repeatedly noted that the "influence of Hegel was fundamental" for Marx,[26] the questions of *how influential*, and *in what form* this influence demonstrated itself in Marx's thought are questions of debate. To engage these questions, I've decided to briefly break down what Marx *rejected* from Hegel's thought, what he *accepted*, and *adaptations* which were made by Marx using Hegel as the dialectical starting point.

4.3.(a) Rejections

Hegel deployed religious language, engaged the question of religion to varying degrees, and in the opinion of some, produced a philosophical account of history and knowledge which began and ended with God. Unlike Hegel, Marx was not unclear on his position. Seeing the state as merely a

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[22] Smith, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," 81.
[23] Jessop, "Karl Marx," 49.
[24] Gordon Bailey and Noga Gayle, (eds.), "Karl Marx: Introduction and Major Works," in *Social Theory: Essential Readings*, (Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press Canada, 2003), 39.
[25] Bailey and Gayle, "Karl Marx: Introduction and Major Works," 40.
[26] Martindale, "Major Conflict Ideologies of the Nineteenth Century," 157.

creation by human beings, and religion being no different,[27] Marx's corpus did not deploy religious terminology except to critique the role of religion in society at his time. And critique it he did, but not in a manner many accuse him of. For Marx, "[r]eligious suffering is at once the *expression* of real suffering and the *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world … it is the *opium* of the world."[28] Oft misquoted on the subject, Marx clearly sees religion not simply as a drug which blinds the populace in the manner of addiction, but rather as a means of anesthetic against the horrors of the capitalist world. While he recognizes the functional role religion plays, he still seeks to distinguish between 'real' suffering and 'religious' suffering, arguing that

> The overcoming of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. The demand that they should abandon illusions about their conditions is the *demand to give up conditions that require illusions*. The critique of religion is therefore in embryo a *critique of the vale of tears,* whose *halo* is religion.[29]

Marx's critiques of religion are thus materialist in nature, making the claim that only by recognizing the true causes of suffering can any group of people pull together and overcome them.

Marx's view of religion is therefore bound up with his critique of ideology more generally – perhaps best represented in his critique of philosophical idealism evident in his critique of Hegel present in *The German Ideology*. Critiquing the power of idealism over the material, Marx notes that the "phantoms of [our] brains have gained mastery over [us]," and that we, "the creators, have bowed down before [our] creatures."[30] While Marx saw philosophy as a potential tool of the proletariat,[31] he was aware of the risks of falling into idealism. This is in keeping with his rejection of philosophy as a sole means to overcoming the problems of the world clearly laid out in the *Theses on Feuerbach*.[32] As part of this rejection of idealism, Marx moved away from Hegel's focus on consciousness and its development. Noting that humans can be "distinguished from animals by

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[27] Karl Marx, "Conrtibution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *The Portable Karl Marx,* (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 115.
[28] Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 115, emphasis original.
[29] Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 115-16, emphasis original.
[30] Karl Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," in *The Portable Karl Marx,* (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 162.
[31] Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 123-24.
[32] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Portable Karl Marx,* (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 158, emphasis original. "Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it."

consciousness, religion or anything else you like," they *distinguish themselves* "as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence."[33] He goes on to claim that

> As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production … [And that] [t]he production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life.[34]

In doing so, Marx clearly shifts the focus on the origins of consciousness to a consequence of worldly activity, focusing on the practical, everyday life of individuals and their productive capacities. This inverts – in Marx's eyes – Hegel and romantic German philosophy which "descends from heave to earth" by "ascend[ing] from earth to heaven" instead.[35] Despite this apparent inversion, this is one place where Marx arguably overly idealizes Hegel's philosophy of consciousness, as worldly, practical activity is central to the movement from sense-certainty to consciousness and later self-consciousness.

Despite the apparent connection with empiricism Marx lays out, his materialism is "not devoid of premises,"[36] it simply

> starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subject, as with the idealists.[37]

From this materialist position we see elements of the sociological aspects of Marx start to arise, noting that when speculation ends "real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity … of the development of man."[38]

Marx clearly rejected what he saw as Hegel's idealistic account of the world, focused on consciousness as the necessary starting point of discussion to make sense of anything, and the

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[33] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 164, emphasis original.
[34] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 164-69, emphasis original.
[35] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 169.
[36] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 170.
[37] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 170.
[38] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 170.

impression Hegel gave that philosophy is a means unto itself for making sense of – and thus changing/controlling/advancing history. This does not mean that Marx rejected the importance of consciousness,[39] philosophy,[40] history,[41] or indeed ideas,[42] merely that Marx was rejecting the way Hegel apparently gave elements of the superstructure causal primacy over elements of the base. This is demonstrated clearly by Marx when he claims that "the economic structure of society" forms the "real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."[43] From this Marx, in what initially appears to be a deterministic manner, goes on to claim that with any "change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."[44] This is easily misleading, however, as it doesn't represent an economic *determinism* so much as an economic *primacy*. Marx recognizes such primacy through the difference between economic and non-economic (i.e., legal, political, religious, philosophic, or otherwise 'ideological') change, and its consequences.[45] This is well represented by Schneider's account of historical materialism, which demonstrates the lessened – but still impactful – influence of these elements of the 'superstructure' upon the 'base.'[46] This economic base also maintains a historical and social flexibility wherein one can see "endless

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[39] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 169, 173-75. Marx discusses consciousness repeatedly across several texts and is aware of its importance, but always seconds it to the primacy of the material experience of the individual, rather than the other way around.

[40] Marx, "Contributions to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 124. "Philosophy can only be realized by the abolition of the proletariat, and the proletariat can only be abolished by the realization of philosophy." Even Marx's famous statement in §11 of the *Theses on Feuerbach* does not reject philosophy, it merely demands a material refocusing to avoid being trapped in idealism. (see Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 158).

[41] Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 287; Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 171-73, 181.

[42] Marx, "Contributions to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 119. Marx clearly does not reject ideas or even ideals, he merely seeks to cement them to the material through a process of praxis. "The weapon of criticism, it is true, cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory also becomes a material force when it takes hold of the masses. Theory is capable of taking hold of the mases as soon as it … becomes radical. To be radical is to take things by the root. The root for man, however, is man himself."

[43] Karl Marx, "Preface," in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, (trans.) N. I. Stone, (Chicago, IL: The International Library Publishing Co., 1904), 11.

[44] Marx, "Preface," in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 12; see also Karl Marx, "The Genesis of Capitalist Ground-Rent," in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Three*, (trans.). David Fernbach, (London, UK: Penguin Classics, 1991), 929.

[45] Marx, "Preface," 12. This is also demonstrated historically by an example given by Marx noting that attacks on the theological bases of the Church of England is considered a 'light offence' compared to the criticism of existing property relations. See Karl Marx, "Author's Prefaces: 1. To the First Edition," *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 9.

[46] Schneider, "Historical Materialism and Its Legacy," 93-95. See especially Figure 3.1.

variations and gradations in its appearance, as the result of innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural conditions, racial relations, historical influences acting from outside, etc., and these can only be understood by analysing these empirically given conditions."[47] This is described elsewhere when Marx notes that while "capital is a universal and perpetual condition of nature … [p]roduction is always a *particular* branch of production," and there is no such thing as 'general production.'[48] This distinction between capital and production demonstrates Marx trying to balance – in a manner not dissimilar to later sociologists like Mead, Bourdieu, and others – the universal and particular. It also hypothesizes the necessity of both to a complete account of the social-historical world and the individuals who make it up.

While much has been written about it – and much critical given its open-ended nature - Engels attempted to clarify that the base-superstructure model was not *completely* economically deterministic after Marx's death, dispelling the claims that

> because we deny an independent historical development to the various ideological spheres which play a part in history we also deny them any *effect upon history*. The basis of this is the common undialectical conception of cause and effect as rigidly opposite poles, the total disregard of interaction. These gentlemen often almost deliberately forget that once an historic element has been brought into the world by other, ultimately economic causes, it reacts, and can react on its environment and even on the causes that have given rise to it.[49]

Such flexibility in what may on the surface appear to be a deterministic account is supported by some of Marx's earlier works like *The German Ideology*, where humans clearly remain agents in a given, and impactful, social-historical structure.[50] The intermeshing between economic and historical considerations which come with Marx's account of the base and superstructure represents an excellent place to shift to what Marx accepted and took up from Hegel's account.

4.3.(b) Acceptances

While the majority of concepts taken up by Marx form Hegel were either rejected or adapted in some manner, there are a few which Marx has taken as given, the majority of which have to do

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[47] Marx, "The Genesis of Capitalist Ground-Rent," 927-28.
[48] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (trans.) Martin Nicolaus, (Toronto, ON: Random House, Inc., 1973), 86, emphasis added
[49] Friederich Engels, "Engels to Franz Mehring in Berlin," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Correspondence 1844-1895*, (trans.), I. Lasker, (ed.), S.W. Ryazanskaya, (Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1975), 435.
[50] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 182.

with questions of history and dialectics, which will be my focus in this section. Hegel's account of history was, as we have seen, complex. But some of the elements which Marx took up were the acceptance of the social-historical impact on the individual, as well as the acceptance of the idea of historical progress in a dialectical fashion. Marx took up these ideas, however, in a manner which left room – despite what many have claimed regarding the determinism of his claims – for human agency.

In the first instance, we can see that, for Marx, history is not determinative in the sense that humans have no agency, but rather it represents a canvas upon which human agency can paint. He does this through the establishment of a *materialist history* which maintains, unlike "the idealistic view of history," a view that

> remains constantly on the real *ground* of history; it does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice. … It shows that history does not end by being resolved into 'self-consciousness' as 'spirit of the spirit,' but that in each state there is found a material result: a sum of productive forces, a historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another, which is handed down to each generation from its predecessor; a mass of productive forces, capital funds and conditions, which on the one hand, is indeed modified by the new generation, but also on the other prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite development, a special character. It shows that circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances.[51]

This rejection of an idealistic account of history – and by extension historical change – leads to the claim that historical progress is necessarily dialectical and linked to human agency and action, as

> all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism … but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which give rise to this idealistic humbug; that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history.[52]

Here we can see the elements of pre-existing social-historical factors being taken up and agentively molded by each new generation as much as it molds those generations, as well as his hinting at the progressive nature of the "definite development" of such "driving force[s] of history."

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[51] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 182, emphasis original.
[52] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 182.

This progressive nature is difficult to fully account for, as Marx's 'dialectical method' was "never set out clearly or extensively by Marx himself," and so remains a continues subject of debate and criticism.[53] Despite this, hints of the deployment of this historical dialectical system are scattered throughout his works and correspondences. For instance, in correspondence with Pavel Annenkov, Marx writes:

> The simple fact that every succeeding generation finds productive forces acquired by the preceding generation and which serve it as the raw material of further production, engenders a relatedness in the history of man, engenders a history of mankind, which is all the more a history of mankind as man's productive forces, and hence his social relations, have expanded. From this it can only be concluded that the social history of man is never anything else than the history of his individual development, whether he is conscious of this or not. His material relations form the basis of all his relations. These material relations are but the necessary forms in which his material and individual activity is realised.[54]

While development is not necessarily progress, one can easily trace the dialectical elements moving behind the scenes Marx lays out in this letter, with dialectics interrelating all persons within a social space and across history. Marx's beliefs in the dialectical directionality of history aside, such a framework at least allows for the *possibility* of historical progress.

Many who engage with Marx also argue it is fair to claim that he took Hegel's dialectical system and merely materialized its focus. Kamenka notes this by arguing that

> Marx took over from Hegel the conception that change is the result of dialectical contradictions, of the inevitable conflict of opposites which results from their mutual destruction together with their preservation (or "sublation," *Aughebung*) at a higher level in a new synthesis in which these contradictions are overcome.[55]

This dialectic "also implies that historical development is not a matter of gradual change in the relative weight of social forces, but that such gradual changes of quantity result in sudden leaps of transformations of quality."[56] The mythologizing and abuse of the concept of dialectical materialism has made it difficult to extract the kernel of rationality within. Despite this, we can see the essential dialectical element of Marx's historical materialism, which as noted above

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[53] Eugene Kamenka (ed.), "Reader's Guide," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 566.
[54] Karl Marx, "Letter from Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in Paris," in *Marx Engels Collected Works: Vol 38*, (trans.), Peter Ross and Betty Ross, (International Publishers, 1975), 95.
[55] Kamenka, (ed.), "Reader's Guide," 565, emphasis original.
[56] Kamenka, (ed.), "Reader's Guide," 565.

regarding his account of base and superstructure – whether in the more unilinear model presented in *The Communist Manifesto*, or the more multilinear manner presented in *Grundrisse*[57] – represents a dialectical account of historical progress cemented in the material realm.[58]

Marx repeatedly cemented his position that "[m]en make their own history, but not spontaneously, under conditions they have chosen for themselves; rather on terms immediately existing, given and handed down to them," claiming that "[t]he tradition of countless dead generations is an incubus to the mind of the living."[59] In this we can see an influence which will be expanded upon below: that of Aristotle.[60] This influence is explicit in his earlier dissertation work,[61] which traced the shifting focus in Greek philosophy from metaphysics to ethics,[62] but as will be discussed in §4.4, this Aristotelian influence continued to subtly underly much of his later work. In carrying these influences from Hegel and elsewhere forward, we also see a potential influence upon later accounts of history, society, traditions, and human agency.[63]

4.3.(c) Adaptations and Advances

While the aspects of Hegel which were more or less accepted wholesale by Marx are few, the elements adapted in some manner, are many. This has already been demonstrated by the shift towards a *materialistic* dialectics of history which aimed to overcome idealistic fallacies,[64] and the ways in which history and agency co-influence one another.[65] Even his apparent distaste for

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[57] Kamenka, (ed.), "Reader's Guide," 571-72.
[58] For examples, see Marx's broad outline of the movement from the 'Asiatic,' to 'ancient,' 'feudal,' and then 'modern bourgeois' forms of production for instance in Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," 161; or his tracing of the move from 'tribal ownership,' to 'ancient communal and state ownership,' to 'feudal or estate' properties and their shift to modern private property in Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 165-68, 183-84; or his famous tracing of various historical epochs in Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," 203-17.
[59] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," 287.
[60] Regarding the pre-existence of society and its role in forming the individual, see Aristotle, "Book 1," in *Aristotle's Politics*, (trans.) Carnes Lord, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 4-5, and Aristotle "Book 3," in *Aristotle's Politics*, (trans.) Carnes Lord, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 62-64. For the role of human agency in deliberation and action, see Aristotle, "Book III: Voluntary and Involuntary Actions, Choice, Responsibility," in *The Nichomachean Ethics*, (trans.), David Ross, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 38-59.
[61] Eugene Kamenka, (ed.), "Introduction," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), xvi.
[62] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 31.
[63] Present in both MacIntyre's work, as well as wider sociological theory.
[64] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 171-73; Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx," 74-75, 77.
[65] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 182.

philosophy as it stood during his time was not a rejection, but rather a desire to move towards a 'theory of the realization of theory.'[66]

Perhaps one of the most obvious of these adaptations, relating once more to the question of history, is the future-focusedness already noted by Kline.[67] This is well-represented in Marx's own words when discussing the question of revolution and historical progress:

> The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past but only from the future. It cannot make a start on itself until it has stripped away all superstitions concerning the past. Earlier revolutions needed the recollections of world-history to render themselves insensible of their own significance. The nineteenth century revolution must let the dead bury their dead if it is to appreciate its own significance. Then the rhetoric transcended the substance; not the substance transcends the rhetoric.[68]

Marx here clearly rejects Hegel's claims that history can only be understood retrospectively from a pragmatic position: if one wishes to *make history*, one must aim towards the future. Hinting at the teleology of Aristotle, we can see in this rejection of Hegel a *progressive element* which is essential to Marx.

Beyond the question of history, the central area Marx moved away from Hegel was in regards to economics and the impact of capitalism. While it has already been noted that both Hegel and Marx were influenced by the likes of Adam Smith, and both had an interest in the economic sphere,[69] Marx's engagement was much broader and more critical than Hegel's. Marx for instance, while admiring the work Scottish political economists, noted that

> The individual and isolated hunter and fisherman, with whom Smith and Ricardo begin, belongs to the unimaginative conceits of the eighteenth century [utopias] … which in no way express merely a reaction to over-sophistication and a return to a misunderstood natural life, as cultural historians imagine. … This is the semblance [of an illusion] … It is, rather, the anticipation of 'civil society,' in preparation since the sixteenth century and making giant strides towards maturity in the eighteenth.[70]

Here we can see again Marx's future-focusedness in his account of the development of capitalism, but also his critique of the individualist, atomistic economics of Smith, Ricardo, and many other

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[66] Maker, "Hegel's Critique of Marx," 75-76.
[67] Kline, "The Use and Abuse of Hegel by Nietzsche and Marx," 1-34.
[68] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," 290.
[69] Demonstrated clearly on Hegel's side by Dickey, "Hegel Discovers the Economy," 186-204.
[70] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 83.

political economists at the time. He cements this by following up in saying "[i]n this society of free competition, the individual appears detached from the natural bonds etc. which in earlier historical periods make him the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate."[71] Here we see a very important proto-sociological claim in Marx: by dispelling the myth of the 'first man,' in a historical-anthropological sense as much as from a philosophic sense, Marx is rejecting *both* Descartes' *cogito and* Hobbes' *state of nature*.[72] Indeed, for Marx

> The human being is in the most literal sense a ζῷον πολιτικόν [zoon politikon—a political animal], not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society. Production by an isolated individual outside society – a rare exception which may well occur when a civilized person in whom the social forces are already dynamically present is cast by accident into the wilderness – is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living *together* and talking to each other.[73]

While the necessarily social element of humanity is present in Hegel, it often takes a bit of digging to disconnect Hegel from an individualized interpretation – here Marx makes his position very clear.

While Hegel clearly was aware of the importance of communication in the dialectic of self-consciousness aimed at mutual recognition, Marx more clearly, and repeatedly, laid the groundwork for later philosophers of language and pragmatists like George Herbert Mead by denoting the centrality of language for the differentiation between human and non-human animals, something which is underappreciated in contemporary sociology. Since the 'linguistic-turn' of the 1960s, many have treated analytic philosophies, anthropologies, and sociologies of language as if they simply appeared *ex nusquam*. Again, demonstrating the influence of Aristotle,[74] Marx demonstrates the importance of language to both philosophy and sociology traced back far beyond the contemporary moment.

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[71] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 83.
[72] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 83-85. Marx here and elsewhere traces the dependence of the individual upon the collective back through history, noting that "[o]nly in the eighteenth century, in 'civil society', do the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as a mere means towards his private purposes, as [necessarily] external." (84).
[73] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 84, emphasis and brackets in original.
[74] One of the core considerations of Aristotle was the dialectic between *logos* and *ergon* – often translated as 'knowledge' and 'action.' An important consideration is that logos can also be translated as 'language,' demonstrating the tight relationship between rationality and the capacity for language in Aristotle and other Greek philosophers. For instance, dialogue, the exemplary rational activity – for both Plato and Aristotle – necessarily takes place through language.

While for Marx our productive capabilities are the central differentiator which defines us as 'human,' we can also use things like consciousness, religion, etc.[75] The necessary social interrelations between humans is further highlighted when he notes that

> Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness, as it exists for other men, and for that reason is really beginning to exist for me personally as well; for language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men.[76]

This necessarily makes consciousness "from the very beginning a social product."[77] Something Hegel certainly would agree with given the important role of language in the development of self-consciousness. Beginning *in media res*, Hegel's account in the *Phenomenology* starts from the human sensory experience, and he says little explicitly about language. Despite this, language represents a necessary medium from which thought can occur and the dialectical development of the individual can proceed.[78] In the typically *negative* dialectical sense, Hegel seems to argue that language is "more revealing for what it cannot say than it is for what it does manage to say."[79] It is out of this seeming paradox of dialectics that we realize that "individuality, expressed through the first person of language, does not really come into existence until it exists 'for others',"[80] a process paralleling Hegel's wider dialectic of recognition. This dialectic tension between the specificity of the "individual speaker and the universality of language," with 'universal' simply meaning "other people,"[81] leads to an interesting combination of Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian elements, wherein

> language is preeminently the medium in which other people are already present and precede our own individual appropriations, from childhood on. Language is thus already a symbolic apprenticeship of spirit as a collective reality beyond the individual; and even personal or private expression necessarily takes place within an already established collective framework and as a reaction against it.[82]

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[75] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 164.
[76] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 174.
[77] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 175.
[78] Richard Dien Winfield, "Hegel Versus the New Orthodoxy," 228-29.
[79] Jameson, "Language," in *The Hegel Variations*, 35.
[80] Jameson, "Language," 38.
[81] Jameson, "Language," 43.
[82] Jameson, "Language," 43; See also Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 66.

This simultaneous pre-existence of, and negative relation of the individual to, language seems to emphasize its value for Hegel.

This relation of persons to language is also in keeping with some of Hegel's other claims about the nature of philosophy, such as philosophy forming a circle which has

> an initial or immediate point – for it must begin somewhere – a point which is not demonstrated and is not a result. But the starting point of philosophy is immediately relative, for it must appear at another end-point as a result. Philosophy is a sequence which is not suspended in mid-air; it does not begin immediately, but is rounded off within itself.[83]

As with his dialectical account of recognition, Hegel's concern about the *actual* scientific origin of language is of little import to his overall project, well-phrased by Winfield who notes

> thinking is conditioned by linguistic usage, which is itself an intersubjective practice arising within history and subject to historical change. … [but] because language presupposes conscious intelligence to create signs, train their meaning, and generate intelligible and understood speech, thinking remains bound to the foundational dilemmas of consciousness.[84]

Hegel's general lack of anxiety over origin stories would seem in this manner prescient to later interactionist thought like that of Mead.

Moving beyond the social-historical situatedness of individuals, Marx raises an expansion of Hegel's idea of *alienation* by connecting it to a critique of the impact capitalist production has upon the producer, an adaptation which has spawned a large literature within wider social theory.[85] While remaining a socially interconnected individual, a worker within a capitalist system of production is deprived through a process of alienation of elements of their humanity by Marx's

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[83] Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 26.
[84] Winfield, "Hegel Versus the New Orthodoxy," 229.
[85] See for instance Hartmut Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality*, (Malmö: NSU Press, 2010); Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotexte, 2009); Barry Padgett, *Marx and Alienation in Contemporary Society*, (New York, NY: Continuum, 2007); Amy E. Wendling, *Karl Marx on Technology and Alienation*, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Franck Fischbach, *Marx and Spinoza: Production, Alienation, History*, (ed.) Franck Fischbach and Jason Read, (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd., 2023); Paul Chatterton & Andre Pusey, "Beyond Capitalist Enclosure, Commodification and Alienation: Postcapitalist Praxis as Commons, Social Production and Useful Doing," *Progress in Human Geography*, 44, no.1, (2020): 27-48; J. F. Dorahy, "Alienation, Reification and the Antinomies of Production: On the Theoretical Development of György Márkus," *Thesis Eleven*, 148, no. 1, (2018): 21-38; Daniel Silver, "Alienation in a Four Factor World," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 49, no. 1, (2019): 84-105.

account. Labour, for Marx, "does not only produce commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a *commodity*."[86] This in turn results in the object of an individual's production – the product of labour – confronting them as "an *alien being*, as a *power independent* of the producer."[87] While the product of all labour is embodied in some objectified form (whether the table of a craftsman or the coding of a computer technician), this process of objectification transforms a "loss of the object" from the producer to a form of bondage to it.[88]

Alienation from one's labour creates a situation where work no longer participates in one's essential being, rather one "no longer affirms himself but denies himself"[89] in the process of his labour. One "does not feel well but unhappy, does not freely develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker, therefore, feels himself only *outside* his work, and feels beside himself *in* his work."[90] This process falls into two broad categories for Marx: *alienation of practical human activity*,[91] and *alienation of man*.[92] These categories are not explicitly laid out by Marx, but are hinted towards in his dealing with the two elements of the first type before moving on to dealing with the two elements of the second type. The former category takes two forms: 1) *alienation from the product of labour* – a process of externalization essential to economic development in capitalism, and 2) *alienation from the act of production* within labour, where the worker's own actions appear as if it is an "alien activity that does not belong to him … as an activity turned against him, independent of him."[93] In the latter we have self-alienation, while in the former we have an alienation "of the *thing*."[94] The alienation of man proceeds from the alienation of labour, wherein man can be 3) *alienated from their species-being*, where they turn their connection to the wider human collective to a mere means to individual existence.[95] This process "alienates man from his own body, as well as nature outside him, as well as his spiritual

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[86] Karl Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Portable Karl Marx*, (ed. & trans.). Eugene Kamenka, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1983), 133, emphasis original.
[87] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 133, emphasis original.
[88] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 133.
[89] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 136.
[90] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 136, emphasis added.
[91] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 137-40.
[92] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 140-42.
[93] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 137.
[94] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 137, emphasis original.
[95] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,"138-40.

being, his *human* being."[96] Lastly, one can be 4) alienated from other human beings.[97] The final two forms of alienation are, like the former two, necessarily interconnected, as "[g]enerally, the proposition that man's species-being is alienated from him means that one man is alienated from another, just as each of them is alienated from human nature."[98] And the byproduct of all of this alienation – surplus-value produced from the labour of the alienated individual[99] – belongs to the bourgeoisie, as they are the "*alien* being to whom labor and the product of labor belong, whom labor serves and for whose satisfaction the product of labor is provided."[100]

All of this develops from Hegel's account of consciousness, as Marx notes that "man's relationship to himself only becomes objective and actual for him through his relationship to the other man,"[101] and much like the failure of achieving mutual recognition for Hegel, this relationship is alienated from the individual within capitalism for Marx. Building on these ideas of externalization and objectification which Marx notes as essential within capitalist production we see two other developments in his thought. One of which parallels the idea of alienation: *fetishization*; and the other of which seems an extension of fetishization with an aim toward Marx's critiques of idealism: *ideology*.

As Marx notes, the process of alienation from the product of one's labour, takes the form of the individual's "objectification appear[ing] as the *loss of the object* and *bondage to* it."[102] Much like this, a process Marx calls the fetishism of commodities takes place within capitalism where commodities "cease to be produced for social use and become absolute ends in themselves, dominating man instead of serving him, [and] becoming the ultimate values in the system of

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[96] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 140, emphasis original.
[97] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 140-43.
[98] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 141.
[99] Karl Marx, "The Transformation of Money into Captial," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 98-101. For elaboration on the distinction between 'absolute' and 'relative' surplus-value, see Karl Marx, "The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 120-214; and Karl Marx, "The Production of Relative Surplus-Value," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2*, (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 215-353.
[100] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 142, emphasis original.
[101] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 142.
[102] Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," 133, emphasis original.

production."[103] While Marx's account of alienation developed in his earlier writings to trace the consequences of capitalist production upon workers, commodity fetishism is an account of a process internal to capitalism which has an impact upon those within it. While this distinction may seem pedantic, it is important to note that the earlier Marx (approx. 1844-52) seemed to approach the problems of capitalism from a humanistic position, where the human was the center for the question of what capitalism was and the impacts it had. Later Marx (approx. 1857-67) took a more abstract approach, focused on analyzing the system of capitalism, not merely its impact upon humans. While he was still clearly concerned about the human, his focus on our species-being was seconded to his focused analysis of the economic 'base' of society.[104]

Elaborating briefly on this process of fetishization, Marx defines a commodity as "an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference."[105] Commodities are inherently products *for* humans. He further clarifies that it doesn't matter "how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production,"[106] meaning that whether it is the *product-as-object,* or the *process of producing* which satisfies some human want, it still is considered a commodity. As noted above, production is an inherently human trait for Marx, and the concept of 'commodity' by his definition makes no sense in a non-human case.[107]

Now, it is the "utility of a thing [which gives] it a use-value,"[108] and so long as it has a use-value there is "nothing mysterious about it," it is fulfilling its purpose as a commodity:[109] aimed at satisfying some human want (whether as-object or as a means to the act of producing). This process of creating commodities, however, has what Marx calls a 'mystical character,' as exemplified in the making of a table: "[t]he form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet,

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[103] Kamenka, "Reader's Guide," 567.
[104] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 285, "the mature, the 'historical' Marx—saw the individual in subjection to capitalism, his nature temporary warped by the 'fetishism of commodities.'"
[105] Karl Marx, "Commodities and Money," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol. 1 & 2,* (trans.) Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, Ernest Untermann, (London, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2013), 17.
[106] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 17.
[107] This might be challenged by some contemporary anthropologists and philosophers who argue that certain non-human species can plan, build, and exchange what could be seen as commodities in every sense Marx notes here.
[108] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 17.
[109] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 46.

for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent."[110] It is not the components (in this example, wood) which give a commodity this "mystical character."[111] Rather, it is the *form* of the commodity:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things *qua* commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom.[112]

The individual, in the production of commodities, takes something from the world around them and imbues it with a social value through its production, so that the end result is not merely a piece of wood, but a table which we enter into social relationship with because in it we see the work we put into it, the pride we felt in its completion, the objectification of the value we put on our time, etc. This shifts us from merely seeing the use-value of the table as an object at which to sit and eat, towards an object that's value is embedded in systems of exchange beyond any individual's experience of production. While the initial reification of production is tempered by the worker's connection to their production, this is abstracted when exchange-value, rather than use-value, is the motivating factor for production.

This process is for Marx a reification of the relationship between individual humans, whereby

> the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entered into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in

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[110] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 46.
[111] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 46.
[112] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 47, emphasis original.

> the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the *Fetishism* which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.[113]

This seeming bastardization of the human trait to recognize in the other an element of ourselves allows for the imputation of meaning, and indeed sociality, into an otherwise meaningless and asocial collection of wood.[114]

This process of fetishization, inherent to the production of commodities for Marx, can be seen as an extended critique of idealism, as, just like the products of our hands, the products of our minds can be personified, and given social value. Ideas people would die (and kill) for:

> Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have gained the mastery over them. They the creators, have bowed down before their creatures.[115]

It is from this extension that we see the development of Marx's concept of ideology. Moving beyond a simple rejection of idealism, Marx's concept of ideology critically identifies where ideas gain power beyond and *over* the thinkers to help explain many things in history, often contributing to what came to be called 'false consciousness,' or a consciousness where one cannot tell the actual positions which are in the best interest of oneself and one's class from the positions imposed on them by a ruling class.[116]

Much like the material instantiations of "man's own deed becom[ing] an alien power, opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him," ideas, too, become a "crystallization of social activity, [a] consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control."[117] While Marx recognizes the impact of ideology, he

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[113] Marx, "Commodities and Money," 47, emphasis added.
[114] For further discussion of the wider consequence of fetishism in capitalism, see Karl Marx, "The Division of Profit into Interest and Profit of Enterprise," in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Three*, (trans.) David Fernbach, (London, UK: Penguin Classics, 1991), 515-24.
[115] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 162.
[116] See below for further discussion.
[117] Marx, "The German Ideology: Volume One," 177.

once again traces this back to the social-historical material conditions of the place and time under consideration:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.[118]

These 'ruling ideas' are "nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships."[119] Marx's materialist position does not preclude a recognition that the division of labour "manifests itself also in the ruling class as a division of mental and material labour."[120] This division of labour remains, however, under the power of the ruling class of the historical period. Marx also identifies the historical tendency for ruling classes to frame their ideas in relation to universality, such that theirs are the ideas which represent the best interests of society: "it has to … represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones."[121] This 'struggle of ideas' becomes, just like the material struggle Marx traces through history, all the more sharp in contrast, following a dialectical pattern of negation to the point where eventually class oppositions cease to exist as claims to the 'general interest' of society are no longer ideological necessities, but rather material facts.[122]

While ideology as a concept was not elaborated as much by Marx as it was by those who were to come after him, such as Gramsci[123] and Mannheim,[124] it is an important spark from which many sociologists of knowledge – even outside the Marxian tradition – have been inspired. Indeed, after Marx's death, Engels, lamenting the fact that both he and Marx pointed to the economic realm

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[118] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," in *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (eds.), Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishers, Inc., 2016), 46.
[119] Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology," 46.
[120] Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology," 46.
[121] Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology," 47.
[122] Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology," 47.
[123] Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles (eds.), "Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937): Hegemony and Ruling Ideas," in *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (eds.), Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishers, Inc., 2016), 36-37.
[124] Karl Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia," in *Ideology and Utopia: Collected Works of Karl Mannheim, Volume 1*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 49-96.

to explain the development of social and political ideas they failed to sufficiently clarify how this occurred,[125] went on to link the concepts of ideology and false consciousness more clearly:

> Ideology is a process which is indeed accomplished consciously by the so-called thinker, but it is *the wrong kind of consciousness*. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to the thinker; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or illusory motive forces.[126]

The 'false consciousness' which develops from the taking on of this ideological way of thinking leads to a mere acceptance "without examination as something produced by reasoning," and prevents the individual from investigating "further for a more remote source independent of reason."[127] While the term itself wasn't coined until after Marx's death, the underlying impact of ideology and 'false consciousness' is clear in many of his works, such as *The Holy Family*:

> Workers, employed, for instance, in the Manchester or Lyons workshops, do not believe that '*pure thinking*' will be able to argue away their industrial masters and their own practical debasement. They are most painfully aware of the *difference* between *being* and *thinking*, between *consciousness* and *life*. They know that property, capital, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain but very practical, very objective sources of their self-estrangement and that they must be abolishing in a practical, objective way for man to become man not only in *thinking*, in *consciousness*, but in … *being*, in life. Critical Criticism, on the contrary, teaches them that they cease in reality to be wage-workers if in thinking they abolish the thought of wage-labour … As absolute idealists … they will then naturally be able to live on the ether of pure thought. Critical Criticism teaches them to abolish real capital by overcoming in *thinking* the category Capital.[128]

Here we can see many of Marx and Engels' ideas coalescing into a critique of idealism and the false consciousness which can come along with it. It is only through the material realm that the problems of the world can be identified and changed for Marx.

4.4. MacIntyre: A Non-Marxist Marxian?

4.4.(a) MacIntyre the Marxist (1950s—1970s)

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[125] Engels, "Engels to Franz Mehring in Berlin," 433-34.
[126] Engels, "Engels to Franz Mehring in Berlin," 434, emphasis original.
[127] Engels, "Engels to Franz Mehring in Berlin," 434.
[128] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family Or Critique of Critical Critique*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), 73, emphasis original.

Before discussing MacIntyre's early Marxist works, it is important to note that from the beginning MacIntyre had an eye on *both* Aristotle and Marx, being aware of their interconnections. This is more than coincidentally interesting, but rather highlights a shared philosophical repertoire between the earlier and later works of MacIntyre, as well as a dialectical engagement present in his early Marxist works. Marx was in many ways an Aristotelian, and if this is too strong of an argument for some, he was at least academically familiar with Aristotle and drew from his ideas in the development of his own. The influence of Aristotle on Marx has been noted by many scholars, but specific to how this interrelation impacts MacIntyre and his positions on Marx, Groff[129] gives an excellent overview, which is supported by the later work of Lazarus.[130]

This is something valuable to keep in mind as we turn to MacIntyre's early – and enduring – engagements with Marx, which will be touched on here, and elaborated below in §4.4.(b), (c) & (d). It is important to note that at one point in his early career – a range of time which has fuzzy edges, given his slow move away from Marx *qua* Marxist[131] – MacIntyre didn't simply 'engage' with Marx, but *considered himself a Marxist* for a good twenty years.[132] The tension (as well as surprising overlap) between MacIntyre's early engagements with Christian philosophy,[133] Aristotle, and Marxism helped contribute to his work *Marxism: An Interpretation* in 1953 (later retitled more accurately to *Marxism & Christianity*[134]), which sought to answer the question of where, and how, seemingly oppositional philosophic positions could be brought into dialogue – a

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[129] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism: MacIntyre, Marx and the Analysis of Abstraction," 775-792.
[130] Michael Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity: Aristotelian and Marxist," *International Critical Thought*, 9, no. 3, (2019): 463-479.
[131] Blackledge and Davidson, "Introduction: The Unknown Alasdair Macintyre," xv. Blackledge and Davidson not that it was a slow move away from Marxism through the 60s and 70s for MacIntyre. Elsewhere, Knight argues that by the time E. P. Thompson expressed his wish that MacIntyre complete his thought about the potential for "socialist consciousness within capitalist society," in 1978, MacIntyre had "already left behind both Britain and Marxism." See Kelvin Knight, "MacIntyre's Marxism," in *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), 104. Further to this, Knight critiques Blackledge and Davidson for including works by MacIntyre up to 1974 in their book, as, "by their own admission, MacIntyre had long disengaged from Marxist organization and debate." See Kelvin Knight, "Review Article: MacIntyre's Progress," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 6, (2009): 121.
[132] Knight, "MacIntyre's Marxism," 104.
[133] Paul Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution: Alasdair MacIntyre's Early Marxist Ethics," *History of Political Thought*, 26, no. 4 (Winter, 2005): 700. As both a Christian and a member of the communist party, MacIntyre argued that bourgeois Christianity had been reduced to "a matter of personal taste to be practised at the weekend, [which could] no longer concretely [criticize] social injustice and thus [could] not interfere with daily secular existence," MacIntyre believed that radical Christians "would do well to learn from Marx's turn to politics as a means of overcoming the gap between reality and the vision of freedom in Hegel's system."
[134] Knight, "Review Article: MacIntyre's Progress," 120.

theme which has continued to crystallize throughout the breadth of his work. This demonstrates that, even in his Marxist days, MacIntyre was engaged in a process of dialectic engagement between different traditions[135] – even if it was foggy and undirected as he later came to realize.[136] As noted in Chapter 1, §1.4.(a), MacIntyre's Marxist period was as much a period of engagement outside of Marxist thought as it was of internal Marxist debate. Indeed, it is in part due to the influence of these external traditions of thought that MacIntyre maintained a critical eye even in his most dyed-in-the-wool Marxist moments.

MacIntyre developed many ideas in this period, many of which can still be seen in his mature work. Despite his relatively light engagement with Hegel, influence can be seen in his Marxist work and what came of it. MacIntyre noted that while Marx had to transform Hegel, "the ferment of the concepts of freedom, reason and consciousness in Marx's philosophy is the Marxist debt to Hegel. Hegel without Marx is unrealistic, and in the end obscurantist. Marx without Hegel would have been rigid, mechanical, inhuman."[137] Groff elaborates on this by noting that

> If beginning from 'real premises' is what MacIntyre learned from Marx, it is worth registering too what he says he learned from Hegel. From Hegel, he observes, we get the idea that is not just that ideas grow out of material conditions; the reverse is also the case.[138]

Here we see the balance developing in early MacIntyre between the necessary sociological element to any philosophy, as well as the impact ideas can in turn have upon the socio-historical conditions we find ourselves in at any given point. As MacIntyre puts it, "It was an Hegelian mistake to envisage history as the self-realization of the Idea: it was an Hegelian insight to understand history as *partially* the realization of a series of ideas."[139] Groff continues to elaborate on this noting that a "genuinely dialectical theory should allow for causal determination to flow both ways, with

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[135] This is demonstrated clearly in "Breaking the Chains of Reason," a work from firmly within his Marxist period wherein he engages with the likes of Tom Paine, Jane Austen, Sartre, Hegel, Zhdanov, Isaac Newton, Diderot, Karl Popper, Darwin, Lundberg, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Thomas Hobbes, Wittgenstein, Freud, Lukacs, John Stewart Mills, Charles Dickens, Keynes, and Trotsky.
[136] MacIntyre notes the period from 1949 to 1971 as one of "heterogenous, badly organized, sometimes fragmented and often frustrating and messy enquiries, from which nonetheless in the end I learned a lot." MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 268.
[137] MacIntyre, "The Algebra of the Revolution," 42.
[138] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 777.
[139] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Practical Rationalities as Social Structures," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 134, emphasis original.

respect to the relationship between consciousness and social practices."[140] This Hegelian influence, according to Groff, informs MacIntyre's "arresting claim that all intentional behaviour is enacted narrative."[141]

As much as Hegel was engaged with in the early – and later – MacIntyre, his Marxist period was dominated by political questions as much as anything else. We can see a clear and continued acceptance in MacIntyre of Marx's rejection of capitalism as an inherently alienating phenomenon, his historical materialist position, and his claim that human beings are necessarily productive species-beings:

> Marx's notion of essence is teleological. Marx sees labour as a collective activity that defines humans and develops historically. Humans create themselves and each other—their being-and-becoming—through the process of productive activity. This analysis sees their capacity to flourish denied by the alienation of the worker under capitalism. The estrangement of the labour process necessitates an estrangement from society, reducing humans to atomised individuals.[142]

What can be seen here is the parallel between the Aristotelian concern for questions of the soul, the Marxist concern for species-being, and the later MacIntyre's concern with practices within healthy traditions.[143] MacIntyre also developed what would continue to be a common theme in his later work in this Marxist position, specifically his insistence that "philosophy and practice are not separated, or separable, disciplines of academia."[144]

While MacIntyre's "early Marxist essays are stamped with an unmistakable political optimism," his relationship with Marxism was never "an uncritical one."[145] Indeed, MacIntyre often seems strongest in his negative critiques – something which has led many to consider him either overly pessimistic or vague when it comes to suggestions for positive resolution.[146] This critical engagement, and developing political pessimism, combined with the social-historical

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[140] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 777.
[141] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 777.
[142] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 470.
[143] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 789.
[144] John Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics: The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, (Leeds, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 8.
[145] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics: The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 3.
[146] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 4.

circumstances of his period of Marxism, all played roles in his eventual rejection of Marxism as a political project.

4.4.(b) Rejection of Marxism as a Political Project (1958-1971)

Like with clarifying MacIntyre's time as a Marxist, it is difficult to put a finger on a particular point (a single article, book, or declaration) at which he provides an outright rejection of Marxism as a political project, as well as being a philosophically defensible means of providing an account of ethics. Given that "MacIntyre's relationship with Marx and Marxism was never uncritical … the foundations of his rejection of Marxism were already, to an extent, developing in his Marxist period."[147] As such, I want to look to a *period* rather than a *point*, a period which as you can see overlaps with the above period of MacIntyre's Marxism. I do this to recognize that even as a Marxist, MacIntyre was raising critiques of Marxism,[148] evident from "Notes from the Moral Wilderness" in 1958 to his shift to a "interim period of sometimes painfully self-critical reflection" between 1971-77, from which the largely unified '*After Virtue* project' has proceeded from 1977 until today.[149]

One can trace his abandonment of Marxism as a *political* project in large part to his response to the horrors of Stalinism,[150] and the tendency of Marxists to, as they organize and approach power, become "Weberians in substance, even if they remain Marxists in rhetoric."[151] Such after-effects of Stalinism can be seen in MacIntyre's later work such as *After Virtue*, where he argued that "All power tends to coopt and absolute power coopts absolutely."[152] While the substance of his rejection of Marxism is nuanced, a broad summary is that

> Marxism fails to break from the inadequate moral frameworks of liberal modernity, both in theory and practice therefore, like liberal modernity itself, is unable to be morally coherent or politically relevant. Marxism, despite its best efforts suggests MacIntyre, tends to slip into inadequate modes of moral reasoning that are Kantian or utilitarian in form. Due to the conditions of what MacIntyre calls 'moral

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[147] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 5.
[148] MacIntyre was critical of the unfalsfiability of Marxist theory, and the tendency of Marxism to take on the trappings of religion in its quest for orthodoxy from his early days as a Marxist. See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 1, 4, 6-14.
[149] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 268-69.
[150] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness."
[151] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 109.
[152] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 109.

> impoverishment', Marxism is unable to provide any justification as to how people might come to desire socialism. … In such conditions of moral impoverishment, Marxism is apt to reproduce the manipulative social relations that MacIntyre argues characterizes all moral reasoning within modernity. As Marxists move toward power … they necessarily become Weberian and find nothing but the Nietzschean will to power at their moral foundation.[153]

While his engagement with Marx as a social critic and theorist has continued, Marx*ism* – like liberalism, as articulated in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* – is incapable of breaking from its social-historical circumstance. The baselessness of the moral claims of Marxism is for MacIntyre a critical point which no band-aid solution can resolve. While MacIntyre later was to identify with the Aristotelian themes in earlier Marx's work,[154] there seems to be a clear – and in the eyes of some, unfair – lack of engagement with either later Marxist attempts to address these issues,[155] or connections between the early Marx's Aristotle-influence humanism and the later Marx's apparent economism.[156] What is generally a shared opinion, even among the more Marxist-minded accounts of MacIntyre's move away from Marxism, is that "while not having taken from Marx what he should have, [MacIntyre] has not simply overlooked Marx in a naïve manner."[157] We can see this in part from the elements drawn from his engagement with Marx which remain to this day in his work.

Despite the Marxist critiques, many of MacIntyre's *own* critiques which lead to the complete divorce from Marxism were justified. In his early work *Marxism: An Interpretation,*[158] recognizing that capitalist development has led to an improved standard of living (thus undermining some of Marx's assumptions), he uses the example of art to drive home a different critique more based in the earlier works of Marx:

> art cannot survive. It is a necessity or nothing. Hence the essential failure of capitalism is not that the pursuit of profit is incompatible with the pursuit of social welfare: the essential failure is that the kind of society which capitalism creates is

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[153] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 6. See also 135-203.
[154] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*."
[155] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism."
[156] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity;" Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism." 783, emphasis original. "*Did* Marx abandon a nascent Aristotelianism in favor of a mix of Hegel and British empiricism in his mature analysis of capitalism? In my view, the answer is no."
[157] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 782.
[158] Published in 1953, and later retitled *Marxism & Christianity* in 1968 with slight adaptation, most notably the removal of a concluding chapter which was included in Blackledge and Davidson's work as "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*."

> one that can never fully employ the skills of hand and brain and eye, the exercise of which is part of man's true being.[159]

In so doing, he deploys the Marxist account of species being – of human nature – against its economic determinist predictive power to give immanent critique to the manner in which Marxist thought was tending towards economist orthodoxy in the 1950s.

This tendency towards orthodoxy, one of the several aspects of Marxism which it shares with religion MacIntyre argues, is problematic not merely because of its tendency to move towards Trotsky's prediction of dictatorship,[160] but because it undermined the Marxist pretentions towards being 'scientific,'[161] noting that "[s]cientific theories can be true or false; we can also speak in relation to established theory of their orthodoxy or otherwise. But their orthodoxy is irrelevant to their truth or falsity."[162] It is interesting perhaps to note the prescience in this claim, which he made almost a decade *before* the publication of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Here MacIntyre is clearly recognizing a distinction between truth and orthodoxy (or what might be called in a vulgar sense 'tradition'), and we can see the inkling of his later developed theory of traditions where he uses the former, and the quest for the former, as a means to potentially radically change the latter, while recognizing that some level of orthodoxy is required allow for communication (one cannot be a heretic if one is not also still a member of a community, and it is often heretics who make the biggest changes, Jesus was, after all, a Jewish heretic).

Elsewhere,[163] MacIntyre challenged the mere replacement of socialism's rejection of the "inevitability of the continuation of capitalism" for the "inevitability of the victory of socialism,"[164] noting well that the "fall of capitalism is in no way inevitable; but nor is its survival."[165] MacIntyre critiques Marxism's lack of response to the fact that the "dynamic economic processes associated with capitalism tended to fragment rather than unify the working class."[166] The pessimism this bred

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[159] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 6.
[160] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 10.
[161] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 6.
[162] MacIntyre, "Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*," 8.
[163] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Prediction and Politics," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge & Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 249-61.
[164] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution: Alasdair MacIntyre's Early Marxist Ethics," 713. See also MacIntyre, "Prediction and Politics," 250, 254-56, 260-61.
[165] MacIntyre, "Prediction and Politics," 260.
[166] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 714.

within MacIntyre's perspective was furthered by the problematic present within modern economic crises:

> If economic crises were not going to play the role of fanning the flames of rebellion against this feeling of enslavement, and indeed act to retard them, then MacIntyre was at a loss to explain what forces, beyond the general tendency of capitalism to expand the size of the working class, would act upon human nature to generate the collective revolts upon which socialists could base their practice.[167]

This concern was present in his earlier work, evident in MacIntyre's thought on the role of the vanguard party in any revolutionary socialist movement. Because the working class "on whose conscious agency socialism depended, could not achieve socialist consciousness 'spontaneously,'" the vanguard party's role was not "to build freedom, but to move 'the working class to build it'."[168] This educational role was necessary given that history had demonstrated that capitalism's collapse was not inevitable, and that the development of socialist consciousness was neither spontaneous nor easily maintained, especially in modern liberal capitalist conditions.

Despite his thoughts on the vanguard party, MacIntyre began to move away from conventional party politics, noting that winning over the Labour Party to the cause of socialism was unfeasible, as was reformism in the modern age:

> Reformism then depends upon the presence of three preconditions: a certain type of working class, a certain type of view of the state (itself possible only if the state is of a certain kind) and a certain type of ruling class. But all three preconditions have in fact disappeared.[169]

Because of the state of intertwinement between the capitalist economy and the state, MacIntyre argued in example that the "transfer of steel from 'private' to 'public' ownership would entail essentially a new set of titles for the same set of committees, the criteria of efficiency in the industry would remain the same, that is the industry would be ruled by the criteria of profitability."[170] This example stands as a warning as to how "[n]eocapitalist bureaucracies can assimilate trade-union bureaucrats in a way that old-style capitalists never could."[171] The

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[167] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 715.
[168] Blackledge, "MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a Critic of Marxism," 712.
[169] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism,* (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 283.
[170] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 284.
[171] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 284.

contemporary capitalist system produces for the sake of profit, and not human flourishing in any way, and it remains continuous with older capitalist trends, specifically "the relations of capitalism to labour within the factory at the point of production and the relations between capitalist states in which the sanction of pure force is exhibited most nakedly."[172] It is from these two points that MacIntyre argued a genuine politics of class must proceed.[173]

Indeed, according to MacIntyre "the discovery that many working-class people are apathetic about politics should … cause us neither surprise nor alarm. It would be alarming indeed if it were otherwise."[174] While the political consciousness of workers ought to be built up "upon the rank-and-file shop floor struggles in industry,"[175] this should not be the only means of developing political change, as it is "precisely *within* the factory or *within* the particular industry that workers can be isolated and defeated."[176] In opposition to accepting "the class struggle on the terms in which the capitalist would wish us to accept it," MacIntyre argues for the "task of recreating a political trade unionism out of the existing links between the Labour Party and the unions" through the building of organized political support for policies directed "towards the reorganisation of the working class" and the development of agencies "staffed by skilled economists, which can inform the working class of the overall shape of the new capitalism and of its points of vulnerability."[177] Such political mobilization of trade unions allows for a focus on the interests of wages, education, and survival as a class, and such a programme demonstrates the optimism of MacIntyre in his Marxist period, as "[r]evolutions do not take place in fact against backgrounds of pauperisation and slump. They take place when in a period of rising expectations [where] the established order cannot satisfy the expectations which it has been forced to bring into being."[178] While MacIntyre is critical of over-optimism, he notes that over-pessimism may represent a greater danger to any socialist project.[179]

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[172] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 286.
[173] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 286.
[174] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 286.
[175] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 286-87.
[176] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 287, emphasis original.
[177] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 287.
[178] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 289.
[179] MacIntyre, "Labour Policy and Capitalist Planning," 289.

Blackledge identifies both the "problem of coherence involved in denying that the Labour Party could be won to socialism, whilst simultaneously demanding that it essentially act as a socialist … in respect to … policy," and the problem that MacIntyre "essentially confused the ends of a revolutionary process with its means; for once the working class acted as a united anti-capitalist force, then the success of the socialist revolution would be guaranteed, indeed it would have been achieved."[180] Further to this, Blackledge notes that MacIntyre's writing in this period was against a period of "economic boom and relative depoliticization."[181] This context "was characterized by non-revolutionary working-class consciousness," and "no amount of transitional demands were going to change this."[182] Because of this Blackledge claims it is

> easy to imagine how [MacIntyre] might move from an ultra-optimistic to an ultra-pessimistic interpretation of the potential of workers' struggle to generate socialist consciousness, especially given his belief that at the economic level the class struggle tended to divide workers more than it united them.[183]

Atomization of the working class and the hopelessness for socialist revolution developed as themes in MacIntyre's works of the later 1960s. It is here we can start to see the trend towards questions of the 'local community' which MacIntyre's mature work has focused.

The later Marx's most valuable undertaking was – according to MacIntyre – not the writing of *Capital*, but rather his helping to found the International Working Men's Association.[184] Blackledge here identifies that regardless of whether this observation was correct of Marx, "it certainly appeared to be true of MacIntyre's interpretation of Marxism, for his contemporary strategic insights seemed increasingly abstract and divorced from the practice of a mass movement that could bring them to life."[185] From this it could be seen that while MacIntyre in the late 1960s had not explicitly cut ties with Marxism, it "appeared that he had ceased to view Marxism as either a science or as a guide to action, but rather as just one of many competing worldviews."[186] This opened the wider question which we stumbled into the 1970s with, which lead to the 'messiness' of his theoretical engagements in the period: how to ground the moral and epistemological

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[180] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 716.
[181] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 717.
[182] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 717.
[183] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 717.
[184] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 717.
[185] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 717.
[186] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 718.

framework from which he was acting? As it MacIntyre saw it, Marxism could not longer ground its moral or epistemological claims in any way better than any other framework.

In this sense, MacIntyre's break with Marxism was as much a case of historical coincidence (given the economic and political background of the time in which he was engaging with it)[187] as it was a preface to the extreme relativism which was to gain academic traction in the postmodern turn of the 1970s. Indeed,

> as the 1960s wore on, the tension between the optimism of MacIntyre's will and the pessimism of his intellect become so great that something eventually had to give. Since then, while MacIntyre has remained affirm critic of international capitalism, a deep sense of pessimism has coloured his moral theory.[188]

While Marxism as a political project seemed both ungrounded, and unfeasible, to the MacIntyre of this period, he certainly maintained crucial ties with Marx throughout the rest of his career.

4.4.(c) Continued Marxian (And Hegelian?) Elements in MacIntyre (1977-present)

Despite moving away from an explicitly Marxist position, MacIntyre did not drift towards the commonly asserted label of conservative,[189] rather he was still influenced by his past – and continued – engagement with Marx.[190] While Blackledge focuses on the *changes* between these positions, distinguishing between the 'Marxist' and 'Post-Marxist' MacIntyre,[191] Knight focuses on the *continuity* in MacIntyre's work, and indeed its continued revolutionary potential.[192] Gregson traces a significant continuity in his through throughout the 'three periods'[193] of MacIntyre's work:

> The understanding of the relationship of philosophy to practice and the inadequacies of most moral philosophy, the critique of modern liberal capitalism and the necessity for developing an ethical revolutionary alternative form of social practice, all remain relatively consistent throughout MacIntyre's intellectual

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[187] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 719.
[188] Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 719.
[189] See Chapter 2, §2.1, §2.2, §2.10 and Chapter 8 for elaboration of MacIntyre's non-conservativism.
[190] Knight, "Review Article: MacIntyre's Progress," 121; see also Jeffrey L. Nicholas, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Utopia: An Introduction," *International Critical Thought*, 9, no. 3, (2019): 415.
[191] Despite these differences, Blackledge *also* identifies a series of spaces wherein MacIntyre and Marx can be brought back into dialogue with one another. See Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a Critic of Marxism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 88, no. 4 (2014): 705-724; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Social Practices, Marxism and Ethical Anti-Capitalism," *Political Studies*, 57, (2009): 881; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism: A Road Not Taken," 225; and Blackledge, "Freedom, Desire and Revolution," 720.
[192] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 7; Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism."
[193] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 5.

> genesis … Indeed, it could be argued that, certainly ethically and politically, MacIntyre's commitments have, at least in some ways, not changed. What has certainly changed is the framework, the political and philosophical vehicle through which MacIntyre's ethical and political vision might best be delivered. So while the politics that the contemporary MacIntyre advocates is radically different in terms of scope and possibility from Marxism, what have not changed are the values that underpin them.[194]

This, and similar claims, may seem to be grasping at straws in the eyes of some, who focus on MacIntyre' political pessimism and his move away from questions of international labour to questions of local community seemingly evident in the *After Virtue* project.

Despite these critiques, as well-noted by Lazarus, for those examining the politics of MacIntyre's work, from *After Virtue* onwards

> *After Virtue* is too-often seen as his decisive critique of Marxism, the final blow of the ex-Marxist turned moral critic. … Generally, this view necessitated ignoring MacIntyre's early Marxist writings and how these earlier positions might bear upon *After Virtue* and other later texts. … These one-sided approaches miss the structure of MacIntyre's intellectual history, which is sociologically and politically rich, and framed squarely as a critique of capitalist modernity.[195]

In writing the new prologue to *After Virtue*, MacIntyre himself notes how

> although *After Virtue* was written in part out of a recognition of those moral inadequacies of Marxism which its twentieth-century history had disclosed, I was and remain deeply indebted to Marx's critique of the economic, social, and cultural order of capitalism and to the development of that critique by later Marxists.[196]

Undermining the somewhat shallow accounts of MacIntyre as an ex-Marxist who 'gave up' – becoming perhaps the very thing he critiqued in 'Notes from the Moral Wilderness'[197] – is the fact that MacIntyre's engagement with Marx has become *more* explicit in recent years. This is evidenced in his 'The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken,' and *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, among other places. Such engagements, however, are much more Aristotelian than they might have been in an earlier stage in his career, with him for instance noting that Marx's critique of the 'knowing educator' in the *Theses on Feuerbach* needs to be phrased in Aristotelian

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[194] Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 5-6.
[195] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 464, emphasis original.
[196] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, xvi, emphasis original.
[197] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 46-50.

terms of practice[198] – something which as we have seen is not beyond the realm of possibility given Marx's Aristotelian influences. This continued Marxian influence is also evident in his engagement with areas of Marxist critique which overlap with elements of Christian philosophy.

In the 1995 introduction to *Marxism & Christianity* MacIntyre identifies that because of its evolution out of Hegel's "secularized version of Christian theology," Marxism "does not stand to Christianity in any relationship of straightforward antagonism," but rather "has many of the characteristics of a Christian heresy" which provides "grounds for reasserting elements in Christianity which have been ignored and obscured."[199] This is evident when we compare central Christian tenants to those of capitalism and see opposition, and the question is raised about:

> what attribute[s] Christians ought to take to capitalism … That we love our neighbours and that we recognize that charity towards them goes beyond, but always includes justice. An adequate regard for justice always involves not only a concern that justice be done and injustice prevented or remedied on any particular occasion, but also resistance to and, where possible, the abolition of institutions that systematically generate injustice.[200]

These capitalist systems treat *pleonexia* as a central virtue.[201] A critique of the contemporary MacIntyre in this regard is that he ignores the potential in Marx's later work, which Groff demonstrates well by tracing a common thread across Marx's early and late work. Groff notes that "what Aristotelians can learn from Marx is not only that capitalism fosters *pleonexia*, though it does do this, but that capitalism just *is* institutionalized *pleonexia*."[202] MacIntyre, regardless of how explicitly he wishes to represent it, maintains a Marxian influence in his contemporary work as it remains anti-capitalist, and looks to the experience of the individual in a community, as well as a socio-historical background, to make sense of how one ought to seek the good in their life. Further to this, maintaining both the influence of Hegel and Marx, we can see a continued appreciation for dialectics in MacIntyre regarding the directedness of human life,[203] the development of knowledge,[204] and the development of traditions in history.[205]

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[198] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 287.
[199] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, vi-vii.
[200] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, vii.
[201] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xiii.
[202] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 786, emphasis original.
[203] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 173-74.
[204] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 174-75.
[205] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 359.

Despite some critics claiming that MacIntyre has failed to recognize and engage Marxist answers to his critiques of Marxism,[206] MacIntyre's most recent work, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, demonstrates a more conscious return to Marx in MacIntyre's work, paralleling "MacIntyre's Aristotelian standpoint and that of Marxism."[207] Indeed, according to Lazarus it is "the most significant engagement with Marx's insights since MacIntyre's own departure from Marxism in the late 1960s."[208] Despite the Aristotelian-Marxist dialogue present in the work, and his earlier tracing of Aristotle through Marx,[209] some like Groff argue that MacIntyre did not actually go *far enough* in his Aristotelian reading of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, claiming that "[i]t will not be far-fetched at all to think that what Marx meant can only be expressed, or at least can best be expressed, in Aristotelian terms,"[210] and that while the normative structure of Marx's thought had both Kantian and Hegelian elements, it was above all Aristotelian, and one shouldn't be persuaded by claims that the 'later' Marx had abandoned the normative structure of his youthful writings.[211]

In analyzing *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, Lazarus points out that the Aristotelian debt of Marx can be traced all the way up to the so-called economism of *Capital*.[212] This can be seen in MacIntyre's claim that "[c]apitalism is not only a set of economic relationships. It is also a mode of presentation of those relationships that disguises and deceives."[213] This represents a "notable departure" from his earlier assessment of Marx in the 'The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken,' where MacIntyre "sees Marx's late writings as economistic, downplaying the philosophical foundations and significance of *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*."[214] This demonstrates a

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[206] See Paul Blackledge, "Utopias: Future, Present and Concrete in Alasdair MacIntyre and C. L. R. James," *International Critical Thought*, 9, no. 3 (2019): 420-35; Paul Blackledge "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism: A Road Not Taken," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30, (2008): 215-27; Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity;" and Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism." Despite these critiques, the likes of Blackledge still recognizes areas for dialogue and rapprochement between Marxism and the mature MacIntyre. See Chapter 4, fn. 191.
[207] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 464-65.
[208] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 468.
[209] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 223-34.
[210] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 787.
[211] Groff, "Aristotelian Marxism/Marxist Aristotelianism," 788-89.
[212] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 467.
[213] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 95.
[214] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 467, emphasis original.

response to the critiques of some who saw his rejection of large elements of Marx as unjustified and "dismissive."[215]

A final trend which has continued throughout his career is the tendency towards radical critique and the revolutionary potential in his work. Framed as 'Revolutionary Aristotelianism,' – a term which, granted, has been applied to MacIntyre by Knight,[216] but which has been endorsed by MacIntyre as an accurate representation of his current position[217] – we can see Marxian themes continuing even in the Aristotelian-Thomist MacIntyre.

MacIntyre continues a Marxian theme in claiming that ethics is more than a matter of arguments and positions, but a matter of politics and character formation.[218] A sociology with clear Marxian elements is present in claims in MacIntyre's later works such as:

> we inhabit a social order in which … it is crucial that human beings desire what the economy needs them to desire. What the economy needs is that people should become responsive to its needs rather than their own, and so it presents to them as overridingly desirable those goals of consumption and goals of ambition, the pursuit of which will serve the economy's purposes.[219]

The concern for the impact of the economy upon the individual proceeds here in a manner similar to that of Marx, and while MacIntyre's concern is clearly framed from an Aristotelian perspective which centres questions of desire and the habituation of virtuous action, he fuses this with the later, economic-focused Marx which some claimed he ignored.

While MacIntyre's earlier work focused on the question of a sociology of virtue, rejecting any metaphysical biology, his later work, especially *Dependent Rational Animals*, revised this position,[220] and was supplemented by his concern with the question of natural law. MacIntyre noted that when the modern state was born, "the rule of law was taken to be the rule of positive rather than natural law," and that positive law was whatever the modern state dictated.[221] Again building on his Marxian influences, MacIntyre goes on to identify that because the contemporary

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[215] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx; see also MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 96-97.
[216] See Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 20-34.
[217] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good," 235; Alasdair MacIntyre, "How can Aristotelianism Become Revolutionary?" *Philosophy of Management*, 7, no. 1 (2008).
[218] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 3.
[219] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 4.
[220] Nicholas, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Utopia," 417.
[221] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 4.

state "has become so well integrated with the market, it is in fact the state-and-the-market that is our lawmaker,"[222] recognizing the influence of capitalism as a market *system*, and not merely as an alienating phenomenon viewed from an individualistic perspective.

Despite this seeming awareness of the impact of the capitalist market and the modern state, and his rejection of its influences,[223] some have critiqued that his mature position overly focuses on the small community and ignores – or gives up on – the question of large-scale revolutionary change.[224] MacIntyre's account of the importance of community is summarized well by Nicholas, who notes that the ideal is

> a small community that share[s] a set of understandings of the good who come together to rank-order the practices and goods in their society, who do so while trying to learn from those who disagree with them, and who resist the incursion of large-scale markets that undermine the rationality and decision-making of the members of the community. Under these conditions, members can educate their desires and hope to achieve some of them. In short, they engage in a better way of living.[225]

Nicholas argues that "[t]his picture is certainly Aristotelian, but it is also Marxist in the sense that it privileges a non-alienated life."[226] I would add to this that such a position is not only Marxian in the sense that is privileges a non-alienated life, but in the parallels which can be seen in Marx's own work regarding our species-being.

Discussing the question of the true essence of man and the role of community, Marx argues that

> The essence of man is the *true community* of man, men, by activating their own essence, produce, create this human community, this social being which is no abstract, universal power standing over against the solitary individual, but is the

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[222] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 4.
[223] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007b), 213. "Those who value rational local communal enterprise are therefore wise to order their relationships with the state and market so that, as far as possible, they remain able to draw upon those resources that can only be secured from state and market, while preserving their own sufficiency, their self-reliance, and their freedom from constraint by either. They must treat the agencies of state with unremitting suspicion."
[224] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 474-76.
[225] Nicholas, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Utopia," 415.
[226] Nicholas, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Utopia," 415.

> essence of every individual, his own activity, his own life, his own spirit, his own wealth.[227]

In doing so, Marx rejects the atomization inherent in capitalism, and denotes the central importance of human community. Despite this, some still challenge any approach which seeks to challenge the existing order, claiming that it would "have to seek some universality, to reach beyond the community,"[228] regardless of whether that community is conceived of in Marxian or Aristotelian terms.

MacIntyre responds in part to some of these critiques by drawing on the Hegelian element in Marx which allows for ideas to impact the physical realm. He presents the example of the development of a new school in a community, and how – so long as the community exists in some tradition of rational enquiry – it provides the opportunity for questioning, and potentially challenging, large-scale social structures. The creation of – or refurbishment of – a school in a community provides the opportunity for

> Parents, teachers, and other interested members of the community, to become involved and to participate in discussion and decision making. By so doing they become unable to avoid such questions as 'What kind of school do we want to construct for our children?' and 'What do we want our children to learn?' This latter question, however, cannot be answered, unless we also ask not only 'What do we take the goods of childhood to be?' and 'How through achieving the goods of childhood can our children be prepared to achieve later on the goods of adulthood?', but also 'What are the virtues of teachers, children and parents?'[229]

MacIntyre argues that these "recognizably Aristotelian" practical questions can only be answered sufficiently in light of what is offered by Aristotle and Aquinas, but also "in the light of things that we now know," which Aristotle and Aquinas might have been ignorant to.[230] These include the consideration that children cannot learn if they are hungry, which raises the question of how to ensure children in school won't be hungry, and that this question of hunger becomes an educational question. Children are also negatively impacted by unstable family lives, and so the question of effective schooling extends not only to the question of food, but also to how the bases for an effective family life can be provided by the community. These questions in turn extend to questions

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[227] Marx, as cited by Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 469, emphasis original.
[228] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 476.
[229] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 4-5.
[230] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 5.

of employment, income, etc. "In other words, once you begin to map out what is involved in the project of bringing this kind of school into being, you will have to raise at the level of everyday practice a much wider range of political and moral questions about human goods."[231] Because these are practical questions that terminate necessarily in human action, they bring one necessarily into contact with "the systematic resistance of the representatives of the larger social and economic structures."[232] This example – and others like it – "provides the experience and the character formation that enable us to learn … at the level of everyday practice, what our good consists in in *concrete* and *particular terms*."[233] Despite the particularity which MacIntyre concerns himself with here, there is clearly space for expanding this concern to wider questions which – granted – are unoffered in this example, such as 'how can this resistance be overcome,' and 'ought we continue to accept *x* or *y* structure as legitimate?' So long as these remain *practical* questions, action has the potential to follow which challenges far more than the particular space of questioning.

MacIntyre further specifies what he means when he is discussing the particularity of a given community when he distinguishes his position as 'utopian' in a manner:

> What you will be told by those who represent established power is that the kind of institutions that you are trying to create and sustain are simply not possible, that you are unrealist, a Utopian. And it is important to respond by saying 'Yes, that is exactly what we are'. The Utopianism of those who force Aristotelian questions upon the social order is a *Utopianism of the present*, not a *Utopianism of the future*. Utopianisms of the future have been and are misleading and corrupting, because they are always apt to and almost invariably do result in a sacrifice of the present to some imaginary glorious future, one to be brought about by the sacrifice of the present. But the present is what we are and have and a refusal to sacrifice it has to be accompanied by an insistence that the range of present possibilities is always far greater than the established order is able to allow for.[234]

In this we can see him challenging the future-focusedness of Marx in favour seemingly of a more Hegelian-Aristotelian position. Aristotelian questions are potentially revolutionary precisely because they refuse to submit to the common assumptions of the modern liberal capitalist social

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[231] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 5.
[232] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 5. While MacIntyre notes that 'resistance' can be a positive thing (the resistance of unions against wage cutbacks, for instance), he is here concerned with the "resistance of the established order, of the representatives of the established patterns of power, to any attempt to ask and answer Aristotelian questions at the level of practice." (5).
[233] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 5, emphasis added.
[234] MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," 5, emphasis added.

order. And they are not lost in the 'suffer now, hope for later' approach which many Utopianisms of the future take as their stock-in-trade, but rather *demand* action in the present. It is worth nothing that those who often decry others as 'utopian' tend to be those who "pride themselves upon their pragmatic realism," and focus on the predictable relationship between input and output and seek immediate results.[235] Such critics of utopianism are "the enemies of the incalculable, the skeptics about all expectations which outrun what they take to be hard evidence," they are "deliberately shortsighted" and "congratulate themselves upon the limits of their vision."[236] Such cries of 'utopianism!' are based in a conception of social reality which represents a hard limit of the possible, may better be understood "as a symptom of the condition of those who level it than an indication of the projects against which it is directed."[237] Indeed it is such worldviews that unquestioningly allow the "structures of present society [to] have exempted themselves from and protected themselves against being put in question" by any kind of systematic critique.[238]

Contra those who decry his position as utopian, MacIntyre claims that it is *only* in small-scale communities that "politics [are] able to escape from the compartmentalization that is endemic in the modern world," and which opposes human flourishing.[239] This also does not eliminate the various teloi to our action which are inherent in any Aristotelian account of human life, rather it cements such teloi in the present – and *material* – world, clearly uniting the practical philosophical elements of Aristotle with the historical-material concerns of Marx, and allowing for access to considerations of the possible, the unknown, and the incalculable, rather than simply being trapped in the present.[240] Indeed, MacIntyre's 'Utopianism of the present' is quite the opposite of the 'pragmatic realism' he critiques in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, and perhaps is better framed as the application of Utopian considerations to the present through a series of practices which necessarily ties the two together – giving preference to *neither* the future nor the present.

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[235] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 234.
[236] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 234.
[237] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 235.
[238] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 235.
[239] Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight, "Introduction: Towards a Virtuous Politics," in *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 4. See also, MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 248.
[240] This provides an interesting area for potential deployment of MacIntyrean ethics in the area of risk theory, but which is beyond the range of the current work.

This is in keeping with his claims elsewhere that "neither in life nor in enquiry is it possible to encounter the concrete and particular except as instances of the universal and the general."[241]

Knight claims that Aristotelianism in the manner deployed by MacIntyre is potentially revolutionary for several core reasons. For instance, because MacIntyre's account of practices and individuals is necessarily teleological they allow for the possibility of progress throughout history,[242] which in turn allows space within MacIntyre's wider historical account for the possibility of radical and revolutionary change. This is supported by MacIntyre in other works, such as his claims that Thomistic natural law can be subversive,[243] a case-study to his wider argument that traditions in good order are not inherently conservative social phenomena.[244] Further to this, Knight traces how the reasoning internal to practices allows for the practitioner to judge between right and wrong[245] – allowing for potential social chance internal to, and beyond, a given practice.

Despite the many critiques about MacIntyre's focus on local communities, and the questions about how 'revolutionary' anything on such a scale can really be, Knight pushes back against this by suggesting that

> the rationale of MacIntyre's social theory of practices is that the bases of … certain forms of community [which] are to be found no longer in locality, but rather in particular practices. Accordingly, the tasks for a politics in the Aristotelian tradition are to defend the rationality, ideals, creativity, and cooperative care for common goods of practices against institutional corruption and managerial manipulation, and to uphold internal goods of excellence against external goods and claims of effectiveness.[246]

In doing so, Knight highlights the possibility of expanding MacIntyre's account of practices beyond the typical bounds of community.[247] And given that these practices *must* resist the

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[241] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Ends of Life and of Philosophical Writing," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139.
[242] Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 22.
[243] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 41-63.
[244] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354-65, 383.
[245] Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 23.
[246] Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 32.
[247] This represents an interesting area of potential future research, especially in the age of internet communications and communities.

corruption of both the state and the market to function, they all maintain at least a kernel of revolutionary potential.

Taking one step further, Knight notes that "Aristotelian theory may contribute to pursuit of the subordination of institutions to practices," and that the legitimation and coordination of such attempts allows for "previously isolated struggles" to be "transformed into a new class war of attrition."[248] MacIntyre, according to Knight, remains a "radically political thinker" who ought to be read alongside Thompson and Marx as a philosopher who is not merely attempting to interpret the world, but to change it.[249]

While MacIntyre himself does not elaborate on the large-scale consequences of the actions of individuals, communities, and traditions, he is clear that in the contemporary moment

> What is most urgently needed is a politics of self-defence for all of those local societies that aspire to achieve some relatively self-sufficient and independent form of participatory practice-based community and that therefore need to protect themselves from the corrosive effects of capitalism and the depredations of state power. And in the end the relevance of theorizing to practice is to be tested by what theorizing can contribute, indirectly or directly, to such a politics.[250]

It is essential to understand such a claim, as it helps demonstrate the value in MacIntyre's work despite any gaps which may be discovered. In such a claim we can equally see Aristotle and Marx in MacIntyre. Aristotle, in providing an answer to the question of 'what is the good life' and how one is to live it, demonstrated that the good life is a process, a state of being-and-becoming which required constant work. He provided a rational *method* for the undertaking of the practical philosophy which aimed towards such a good life. He did not get stuck in the metaphysics of Plato but was instead *practical* and *material* in his consideration of the good. Likewise, Marx did not get stuck in the metaphysics and idealism of Hegel, but considered the question of what the good life looks like in a *practical* and *material* manner, with a specific focus on how it was being destroyed by the current political and economic system. Despite his concern with the telos of communism, he didn't dictate precisely *what* a communist future would look like in detail, but rather provided the *critical tools for asking that question*. Each considered the importance of

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[248] Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 34.
[249] Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," 34.
[250] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxvi.

praxis, and that theory ought to be part of an ongoing hermeneutic process of the development, testing, critiquing, and redevelopment of politics through human action.

And so, the influence of both can be seen here in MacIntyre, who clearly rejects the alienation and erosion of human good within capitalism, as much as he rejects the idealism of various Enlightenment thinkers and their separation of reason from practical philosophy. Like Aristotle and Marx, MacIntyre is *not* providing an answer per se, rather he is providing a rational framework from which one can ask – and attempt to answer – the questions of life. This provides the foundation for his mature work: that it is only in a community that humans – as dependent rational animals – can pursue the means of living a good life. It is only if such a community is functioning that such activities can proceed without being derailed. It is only by resisting the degrading influences of social structures like that of the state or the market, or the state-and-the-market as a "huge, single, complex, heterogeneous, immensely powerful something or other,"[251] that such communities can continue to seek the good without, as took place under liberal capitalism, replacing various virtues with vices and re-envisioning them *as* virtues.[252]

While centralizing the importance of local community in his politics, MacIntyre doesn't claim that there is anything good about local community *as such*:

> The relatively small-scale character and face-to-face encounters and conversations of local community are necessary for the shared achievement of the common goods of those who participate in the rational deliberation needed to sustain networks of giving and receiving, but, absent the virtues of just generosity and of shared deliberation, local communities are always open to corruption by narrowness, by complacency, by prejudice against outsiders and by a whole range of other deformities.[253]

Here we can see a that without the seeking of, and practicing of, particular virtues, a local community is not *de facto* better than any of the structures of the market or state. MacIntyre elsewhere notes that the rationality of these local communities, when it exists, "is always an achievement, the outcome of a history in which a variety of difficulties and obstacles [have] had

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[251] MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," 211.
[252] The case example here being that of pleonexia. See Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight, "Introduction: Towards a Virtuous Politics," 3; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity,* ix-xiv; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 137; MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," 39
[253] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 142.

to be overcome," and that such rationality is always under threat from the "seductive and coercive forces" which typify modern state and market relations.[254]

As noted above, MacIntyre is providing a *method*, not an answer. It is here also that MacIntyre claims that philosophers would "benefit from becoming historical and sociological,"[255] and calls for the comparative study of "examples of different types of local community … at their best and at their worst, and … that have been or are open to alternative possibilities and that sometimes move towards the better and sometimes towards the worse."[256] This call for case-studies, and the sociological testing and application of ethical and epistemological concerns, is a repeated theme within MacIntyre's work, albeit one which he himself doesn't focus on (at least compared to the amount of effort directed to the historical framing of such ethical and epistemological concerns).

4.4.(d) Applying a 'Marxian-Aristotelian MacIntyre' to Sociology

I argue that it falls to sociologists and other social scientists to test-run the methods of practical rationality which MacIntyre has laid out: to keep philosophy central to our engagement with the world, and necessarily grounded in that world. Taking Weber's wisdom about the necessary trade-off between depth and breadth of knowledge,[257] it would be impossible for someone with the range of MacIntyre's engagement with a host of disciplines to 'test-run' every single concept, theory, or claim materially. Despite his respect for historical and sociological examples, most of MacIntyre's exemplary support for his claims come from drawing on connecting threads between the social-historical world and the philosophical claims he is making. Theoretically minded sociologists are well-positioned – perhaps better positioned than sociologically-minded philosophers – to deploy and test the range of MacIntyre's work. And given MacIntyre's openness to critique,[258] and

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[254] MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," 223.
[255] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 142.
[256] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 143.
[257] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 11, 17-18.
[258] MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," 205-7, 222. MacIntyre makes it clear here and elsewhere how essential critique and debate within – and between – communities and traditions of thought are to the rational flourishing of those communities/traditions, and that one of the virtues of conversational and argumentative accountability is the "taking pleasure in having been shown to be mistaken, something notoriously difficult to achieve." (222).

adjustment of his position,[259] as well as his concern for the importance of falsifiability,[260] this is a project of application which I think it is fair to claim is inherently MacIntyrean in nature. Support for this is perhaps most evident in the account he gives in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* about the *progress of ends*, wherein not only is progress achieved in action but also "in our conception and recognition of what the highest perfection is," and the *necessity of both rule-keeping and rule-breaking in the pursuit of virtue*.[261]

It is from this point of departure that we continue to trace the question of sociological applicability of MacIntyre's work,[262] proceeding on the hopefully-well-argued claim that MacIntyre's sociological training, makes him not only a member of a tradition which is translatable to that of sociology, but precisely the kind of 'academic dilettante' which Weber identified as essential to prevent the siloing of academic work in the modern age.[263] In doing so, I seek to not only demonstrate the value to be gained by sociologists in applying the various concepts, critiques, and frameworks provided by MacIntyre, but also the value of applying MacIntyre to his own project of using a Marxian-influenced Aristotelian-Thomist philosophy to critique the modern liberal capitalist world.[264] In the next Chapter, we will see that this shared intellectual heritage is not simply traceable from MacIntyre back to Marx, but also to Weber. As a major sociological figure and influence on MacIntyre, it makes sense now to turn to Weber to continue our dialogue.

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[259] Lazarus, "Politics in the Conflicts of Modernity," 474; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315. MacIntyre's apparent 'philosophic chameleonism' doesn't represent a weakness of position, but rather his belief that *failure* is an inherent process of the development of virtue, which is included in the development of an ethical or epistemological position. This demonstrates MacIntyre's earnest question for rationally justifiable positions, a virtue demonstrated throughout his career. See Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, 4-6.

[260] MacIntyre, "Determinism, 40; MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 259; MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," 70; MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends, Contemporary Issues," 163; "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 187-88.

[261] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 31.

[262] MacIntyre, "The Ends of Life and of Philosophical Writing," 141-42. MacIntyre makes it clear throughout his work, not only in practice, but in direct claims, that engagement with "different and incompatible standpoints" is essential for philosophic work.

[263] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 11-18.

[264] Blackledge and Knight, "Introduction: Towards a Virtuous Politics," 5.

SECTION 4: THEORETICAL TRADITIONS WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE: FROM NIETZSCHE TO WEBER

Chapter 5: Sociology As a Response to the Failure of the Enlightenment

Max Weber (1864-1920) represents another major figure who not only has an important historical role to play in the makeup of contemporary sociology, but who is also a theorist with whom MacIntyre has engaged relatively frequently, both critically and supportively. Understanding where some of the themes in Weber came from, to be able to trace them through to the variety of theories they have influenced, is important not only from a historical perspective, but also because some of MacIntyre's critiques of Weber represent larger critiques of the theoretical themes which can be traced *through* Weber.

While an entire book could be spent analyzing the impact various elements of his personal life had on his theory and theorizing,[1] let alone the critiques and developments stemming from his work,[2] my engagement with Weber is – in a very Weberian fashion – aimed at being ideal-typical. I am seeking to lay out the theoretical trappings Weber brings to the party, to trace how they were put together, what influences we can see in them, and the impact they have had going forward, and so I shall proceed with rather little focus on the life of Weber as an individual. I do, however, plan to proceed in a somewhat historical fashion in Chapter 5, beginning with the Nietzschean influence in Weber (§5.1), focusing on his formulation of a *radical individualism* and his *critiques of various social standards and mores* (something important as this is something MacIntyre has engaged with aside from its presence in Weber). This will specifically involve looking at Nietzsche's critique of religion (§5.1.[a]), the role of *ressentiment* and the idea of 'overcoming' (§5.1.[b]), before linking these Nietzschean influences to Weber (§5.1.[c]). From here we will take a look at Weber's contribution to sociological theory (§5.2) – especially his core concepts of *ideal-types* (§5.2.[a]),

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[1] Wolf Heydebrand, "Introduction," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Heydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), ix.

[2] See for instance Habermas' critique of Weber's account of rationalization and it's dead-end of an 'iron cage,' Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, (trans.) Thomas McCarthy. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1984), 248-54, 267-70; Stoliarova's critique of Weber's account of progress, Olga E. Stoliarova "The Charisma of Reason during the Re-Enchantment of the World," *Social Epistemology*, (2021): 1-10; and DiMaggio and Powell's critique of Weber's account of the rationality and efficiency of bureaucracies, Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review*, 48, no. 2, (Apr., 1983): 147-60.

forms of authority (§5.2.[b]), and *forms of social action* (§5.2.[c]). From here we will turn to Weber's methodology and contributions sociology as a *discipline* (§5.2.[d]) – focusing on the ideas of *rationalization* (§5.2.[e]), *disenchantment* (§5.2.[f]), the '*iron cage*' (§5.2.[g]), and *fact/value distinctions*. This will lead us into Chapter 6, where we will look at Weber's (a)moral position, especially his response to the nihilistic 'polytheism of values' in the argument for seeking a '*vocation*' which Weber makes (§6.1). Finally, we will move to drawing out some parallels and contrasts between MacIntyre and Weber to conclude the Section, especially focusing on the value of using MacIntyre's conceptions of *traditions*, *practices*, and *crafts* to critique Weber's concept of '*vocations*'[3] (§6.2.[a]), and looking at the *shared pedagogical element* in MacIntyre and Weber and the role they play in questions of *human flourishing* (§6.2.[b]). While my main engagement with MacIntyre will be in this final section, as with previous chapters I will be touching on MacIntyre throughout the chapter when he becomes relevant to keep a clear connection between the two theorists.

5.1 Nietzsche's Influence on Weber

Weber, like any other theorist, represents a position in history which – as Hegel would argue – is responding to previous theses in a larger historical dialectic. For Weber, two major theorists to which he was responding were Marx and Nietzsche.[4] From Marx we can see Weber's concern for the material, but also his rejection of Marx's historical materialism.[5] Weber sought to balance attention to the *material* with attention to the *ideal*, largely in response to the *apparent* rejection by Marx of the ideal in terms of its causal influence on the social and moral realms.[6] In addition to this, Weber did not buy into Marx's concept of a necessarily unidirectional progress of history; of

[3] A connection noted by others including Kelvin Knight, who states that a vital aspect of practices is "that pursuit of the good internal to a practice [which] enables a person to give narrative order to her life," and that "they might be thought of as vocations." See Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," in *Virtue & Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 22.
[4] Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1966), 141. In addition to this Nisbet points out the influence that Alexis de Tocqueville had on Weber's theories of power, authority, and rationality. Given the shared engagement with Nietzsche in both Weber and MacIntyre, I have chosen to focus on Nietzsche rather than every possible influence upon Weber's work.
[5] Schneider, "Max Weber and Capitalism," 137-40; Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 122.
[6] See Chapter 4 for discussion of the nuance in Marx's position regarding materialism and the realm of the 'ideal.'

a political *Aufheben* of the capitalist system. This is *part* of where what might be classified as Weber's 'islands of normativity' approach comes from.[7]

The other major source of this comes from Nietzsche. Here we can see a critical rejection of the hopefulness of the Enlightenment, and it's view of rationality and of the salvation-programme of Christianity (or religion in general). Where Nietzsche sought to critique philosophy – especially religiously influenced philosophy – Weber aimed at the problematics of a later 'child of the Enlightenment:' science.[8] As I have already discussed Marx at length, I will focus on drawing out various Nietzschean influences in Weber,[9] as well as where Weber moves beyond or rejects Nietzsche. I will also note MacIntyre's responses to Nietzsche. While Weber's relation to Nietzsche seems to be more positive (albeit more rationally restrictive), MacIntyre's engagement is much more critical, recognizing Nietzsche's importance despite being largely critical of him and his heirs.[10] Much like Weber and MacIntyre, I agree that Nietzsche is worth paying attention to, as many of his critiques still hold today, but much like MacIntyre, I am critical of Nietzsche's rejection of *the traditions within which* any positions or actors – including those positions Nietzsche claims to be solely enactments of 'human will' – *become sensible as enactments of anything at all*. This is clear in his rejection of Christianity, where he attempts to critique

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[7] The anti-utopian position Weber develops in his account of value-rationality and vocations is largely based on his Nietzschean influence, insofar as Weber says that one is to simply 'choose' – to *will* – a certain position (or 'vocation') wherein some kind of internal normativity exists. But because any kind of metaethical position is impossible in Weber's account of the social world, there is no reason which can be given for *why* one choice might be 'better' than another. Whether he wanted to achieve some kind of normative position, or avoid the question entirely, doesn't matter, as the outcome of Weber account was normative isolation. MacIntyre, on the other hand, seeks to 'connect' these 'islands' through his account of traditions of inquiry, which has been preliminarily explained in the preceding Sections, and which will be touched upon in more depth in Chapter 6, §6.2.(a).

[8] Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 53. "Weber's 'methodological' question as to the value of science is basically the same question that Nietzsche posed in regard to philosophy when he inquired after the meaning and value of 'truth'—for 'what sense could our existence have, if not the sense that within us this urge toward truth has become conscious of itself as a problem?'"

[9] Walter Kaufmann, "Editor's Introduction," in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, (ed.) W. Kaufmann, (trans.) W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1989), 9. Kaufmann notes Nietzsche's influence in Weber's sociology of religion. Weber's focus on the rationalization and calculability which overtakes the modern work is another area of influence from Nietzsche, who noted: "To ordain the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute. Man himself must first of all have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for *his own future*, which is what one who promises does!" (Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 58, emphasis in original).

[10] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 109-20; 256-63; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 32-57, 144-47, 196-215.

Christianity (and religion generally) from an external standpoint which – by MacIntyre's account – reinforces Nietzsche's non-rational perspective.

Nietzsche's focus on the assertion of will is precisely the result which is to be expected from an attempt to reject what MacIntyre would classify as a tradition from an entirely external position. Here is where we see the problematics of relativism arise – the very problematics which I argue lead to Weber's isolationist position of 'vocations.' Because of the externality of Nietzsche's position in relation to, say, Christianity (or a particular 'Christian position'), there is no reason why one position could be seen as 'better' than the other, and so the only result is that the non-rational aspect of *will* must be the sole means of judgment. MacIntyre, on the other hand, presents the case as to how external critiques are possible, but are only fully effective through a form of internal critique. One must show how a given tradition fails *on its own terms in some respect* for that tradition to acknowledge the critique as successful in some manner.[11] We can see that MacIntyre is on to something here, as Christianity (and religion generally) clearly survived Nietzsche's various, often vicious, critiques. It is only *within a given tradition* – a given historical, social, moral, and epistemic context – that a claim to the superiority of will over 'morality' can be seen as intelligible. Nietzsche – attempting to operate outside the common (Christian) traditional context of his day – was perhaps unconsciously aware of this, given his appeal to aspects of older traditions.[12] While Nietzsche claims to reject entirely the modern world, MacIntyre argues his rejection is a response which is still trapped *in* the modern world.[13] While his criticism of aspects of the Enlightenment are valuable, the normative direction (or perhaps *directionlessness*) that comes out of his theories are less-so.

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[11] This can be seen in his developing an account of how individuals can develop the 'language' of a given tradition, and how striding across multiple traditions for long enough can help one develop 'traditional bilingualism,' which represents the starting point of proper trans-traditional dialogue. However, the most effective progress within a given tradition takes place when someone is 'raised' simultaneously in a series of traditions, and so develops multiple 'first languages.' This allows for externally-influenced critiques to be expressed in the language internal to a given tradition, and help the tradition see that if it cannot answer these internal critiques that it can look outside its own epistemic and moral 'vocabulary' to see what another tradition – honestly represented by its 'traditionally bilingual' member – might offer in terms of moral and epistemic tools. See Chapter 2, §2.1 for further discussion.
[12] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 110. The virtues which Nietzsche praises are "all to be found in previous writers." This is in keeping with Nietzsche's conception of the eternal recurrence of the same.
[13] Kenneth Wain, "MacIntyre and the Idea of an Educated Public," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 14, (1995): 107.

While there are portions of Nietzsche's theoretical contribution which are lacking in a range of ways,[14] the impact of his theoretical contribution cannot be underestimated. Nietzsche as a theorist represents a range of foci which cannot be covered here, even only insofar as they relate to Weber. His work does, however, merit an excursus to form the background of our discussion of Weber, by looking at some of his central ideas, including: his critiques of religion - especially Christianity[15] - and the 'slave morality' it imposes on the individual[16] and his declaration of the nihilistic nature of life in the wake of deteriorating religious worldviews (through such famous claims as 'God is dead'[17]). His acknowledgement of this represents a necessary step in the supposed overcoming of false 'meaning' external to the individual by the individual themselves – in other words, an assertion of *human will as the source of meaning*.[18]

5.1.(a) Critique of Religion

Nietzsche's constant return to the question of human will is a core element of his account of the 'revaluation of all values.' Nietzsche presents the case throughout his work that the morals presented by Christianity represents an inversion of nature, as a 'de-naturalization of humanity.'[19]

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[14] As evidenced in part by the range of feminist critiques of Nietzsche and his influences. Many of these critiques do not reject Nietzsche wholesale. See for instance David Booth, "Nietzsche's 'Woman' Rhetoric and How Nietzsche's Misogyny Curtails the Implicit Feminism of His Critique of Metaphysics," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 8, no. 3, (July 1991): 311-25; Tamsin E. Lorraine, "Nietzsche and Feminism: Transvaluing Woman in 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra'," *International Studies in Philosophy*, 26, no. 3 (1994): 119-29; Katie Brennan, "The Nihilism of the Oppressed: Hedwig Dohm's Feminist Critique of Nietzschean Nihilism," *The Journal of Nietzschean Studies*, 52, no. 2 (Autumn, 2021): 209-33. Likewise, I intend to trace the influences – positive and negative – of Nietzsche through Weber. Benjamin Noys notes that the mixed and multidirectional field of postcolonial studies has taken a different approach from feminist theory. In postcolonial studies Nietzsche has largely been "shorn of his most disturbing elements" (205) and only recently been targeted as being "enmeshed in reactionary and colonial politics" from a postcolonial view (206). See Benjamin Noys, "Übermenschen and Untermenschen: Global Nietzsche and Postcolonial Fiction," in *History, Imperialism, Critique: New Essays in World Literature*, (ed.) Asher Ghaffar, (London, UK: Routledge, 2018): 205-20. Despite this, much like Feminist approaches, we can see in postcolonial approaches a range of attempts to re-engage and re-deploy Nietzsche. See for example Linda Martín Alcoff, "Schutte's Nietzschean Postcolonial Politics," *Hypatia*, 19, no. 3 (Summer, 2004): 144-56 and Andrés Henao-Castro, "Nietzsche and Haiti: The Post-Colonial Rebirth of Tragedy," *Theory & Event*, 21, no. 2, (2018): 358-81.
[15] Walter Kaufmann, "Preface to the Third Edition," *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), xvi.
[16] Alexander Nehamas, "Foreword," in *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), viii.
[17] Nietzsche, "The Gay Science," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 95.
[18] Walter Kaufmann, "Preface to the First Edition," *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), xxi-xxii; Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 243-44; see also Alexander Nehamas, "Foreword," in *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), viii; Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra: The First Part," *The Portable Nietzsche*, (ed., trans.) W. Kaufmann, (Kingsport, TN: Penguin Books, 1985), 115-16.
[19] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosophy, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 231.

But given his accounting of the eternal recurrence of the same, he does not only seek to provide a critique to such Christian values, but rather provide an account of how problematics in any current state of values can be diagnosed and challenged:

> [T]he diagnosis itself is the revaluation, and this consists in nothing beyond what Socrates did: 'applying the knife vivisectionally to the very *virtues of the time*' … The 'revaluation' is not a new value-legislation but reverses prevalent valuations that reversed ancient valuations. It is not arbitrary, but an *internal* criticism. … In Hegelian terms, Nietzsche's attitude is positive insofar as he negates a negation—for he considers Christianity as the 'revaluation of all the values of antiquity.' … More judiciously put, he points out how our accepted morality is dying of internal inconsistencies. … The revaluation is thus the alleged discovery that our morality is, by its own standards, poisonously immoral: that Christian love is the mimicry of impotent hatred; that most unselfishness is but a particularly vicious form of selfishness; and that *ressentiment* is at the core of our morals.[20]

We can see from this that 'revaluation' is for Nietzsche a recurrent process, a catalytic reformulation of values in a rather Hegelian state of dialectic. Indeed, there is a shared MacIntyrean concern here in the form of internal inconsistencies and criticism. Counter to Kaufmann's position, as noted above, Nietzsche's critique is *not* as it might appear actually an internal critique. It is perhaps better phrased as an 'adjacent' critique, given that Nietzsche – and most of his age – would be familiar with Christian culture and beliefs, but he was not an engaged member of the community he was critiquing. As also noted above, Christianity clearly survived his critiques. MacIntyre identifies the potential for external critiques of a given tradition by way of arguments and counter-positions presented by alien traditions, but *it is only when these critiques are taken up by the members of the critiqued tradition and applied internally that they have impact*. Given that there are not many 'Nietzschean Christians,' there is clearly some flaw here – from a MacIntyrean perspective – of viewing Nietzsche's project as a form of internal criticism. Given that Kaufmann seems to be applying this idea in Hegelian terms, it might make sense that he has simply taken 'too many steps back' in a universal view to count Nietzsche's critiques as internal within a particular historical period. *This* kind of universalism is problematic given its lack of nuance and is exactly the kind of universalism which MacIntyre aims to nuance through his social-historical work.

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[20] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosophy, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 111-13.

Internal/external distinctions aside, Nietzsche's account of revaluation helps elaborate how 'slave morality' becomes capable of "creating ideals and reversing values"[21] where we see the 'revenge of the weak' in the changing of 'good and bad' to 'good and *evil*:'[22]

> This 'bad' of noble origin and that 'evil' out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred—the former an after-production, a side-issue, a contrasting shade, the latter on the contrary the original thing, the beginning, the distinctive *deed* in the conception of a slave morality—how different these words … are, although they are both apparently the opposite of the same concept 'good.' But it is *not* the same concept 'good': one should ask rather precisely *who* is 'evil' in the sense of the morality of *ressentiment*. The answer, in all strictness, is *precisely* the 'good man' of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful man, the ruler, but dyed in another color, interpreted in another fashion, seen in another way by the venomous eye of *ressentiment*.[23]

This 'slave revolt in morality' occurs through the development of *ressentiment*,[24] which has as its essence a need for a "hostile external world," indeed, "its action is fundamentally *reaction*."[25] This represents the opposite of what Nietzsche identifies as 'noble morality,' which "acts and grows spontaneously."[26] Slave morality – the tinted glasses of *ressentiment* – for Nietzsche represent a power which brings down the 'Great Men' of noble morality.[27]

5.1.(b) Resentment and Overcoming

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[21] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals" in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, (trans.) Walter Kaufmann and RJ Hollingdale, (ed.) Walter Kaufmann, (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1989), 34.
[22] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 35-39.
[23] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 40, emphasis in original.
[24] Bernard N. Meltzer and Gil Richard Musolf, "Resentment and Ressentiment," *Sociological Inquiry*, 72, no. 2, (Spring 2002): 240-55. *Ressentiment* has been maintained by Nietzsche rather than resentment due to some minor but important differences between the concepts. Resentment commonly refers to "a feeling of displeasure induced by being insulted, offended, or deprived. Thus, it is typically a reaction to slights or affronts … upon one's self." (241). This is necessarily reactive, and short-term (242), whereas ressentiment represents a chronic form of resentment typified not only as not being general rather than specifically reactive, but also as representing an expression of one's "powerlessness to take retaliatory action against its sources." (243). For further discussion see also Michael Ure, "Resentment/*Ressentiment*," *Constellations*, 22, no. 4 (2015): 599-613.
[25] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 37, emphasis added.
[26] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 37.
[27] While such a historical phenomenon was viewed by Weber as a cultural shift – well-represented in his account of the singular events which contributed to the development of capitalism (See *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*) – for Nietzsche such phenomena were not necessarily singular. Nietzsche's understanding of the 'eternal recurrence of the same,' or the long-term circularity of time, contributed to such suppressive transvaluations of all values to recur throughout time (thus he cites 'heroic' and 'willful' figures throughout time, from Gorgias to Napoleon, each representing 'recurrent' examples of 'Great Men').

Such a morality not only weakens humanity's capacity for 'greatness' by tearing down the great, but by raising mediocrity to the highest standard: "The 'tame man,' the hopelessly mediocre and insipid man, has already learned to feel himself as the goal and zenith, as the meaning of history, as 'higher man'."[28] Such a 'tame man' has by Nietzsche's account gained "the right to make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey."[29] This revolt in 'slave morality' leads to the development of what Nietzsche called 'bad conscience,' or the internalization of man upon themselves, with the "instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward against man himself. … the result of a forcible sundering of his animal past … a declaration of war against the old instincts upon which his strength, joy, and terribleness had rested hitherto."[30] While there are a range of views on what is meant by 'bad conscience,' Kaufmann puts it well when he notes that it represents an example of Nietzsche's negative dialectic by self-critique which leads to self-overcoming – a necessary stage prior to reaching the state of *übermensch*:

> To become powerful, to gain freedom, to master his impulses and perfect himself, man must first develop the feeling that his impulses are evil. This recognition is the essence of the bad conscience; man says to himself: my inclinations are damnable, and I am evil. At this point, man is divided against himself. There are two selves, as it were, one rational and the other irrational. … Self-overcoming is not accomplished by a man's saying to himself: I would rather sublimate my impulses. First he must, as it were, burn a No into his own soul; he must brand his own impulses with contempt and become aware of the contradiction of good and evil. … This is Nietzsche's own conclusion of his argument about the bad conscience: it is a necessary evil; it is pregnancy through which one must pass to be reborn in beauty. When man is reborn, the state terminates.[31]

Because of this, the 'bad conscience' of slave morality is a necessary stage in Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. This represents another 'revaluation of values' insofar as the slave morality has taken over from noble morality, and now it in turn must be overcome. Not in a Hegelian form of *Aufheben*, but in a building on the concept of good and evil and a revaluating of *what counts as what*.

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[28] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 43.
[29] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 45.
[30] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 85.
[31] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 253-54.

Nietzsche's historical account of the overtaking of the willful man by the 'tame man'[32] parallels the later concept of the 'iron cage' of Weber's rationalized and bureaucratic world insofar as the iron cage constrains even the most willful personage within a structure of singly directed bureaucrats. One could be skilled in a range of areas, and desire greatness in all, but no matter how skillful and willful they are, they cannot 'will themselves' outside of the rationalized system which they find themselves trapped in.[33] Nietzsche says the same of the willful man, who has been overtaken by the 'tame man,' – a label he might ascribe to bureaucrats were he to take up the research foci of Weber. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Weber seems to move in the direction of a '*permanent revaluation'* – one which represents a *final end*, rather than another link in an eternally recurring chain.

Despite the image that Nietzsche paints of a world dominated by *ressentiment*, he also, as noted, proposes the possibility of its *overcoming*. While the seemingly animalic elements of humanity appear lauded by Nietzsche in some of his work, he also notes that while they are better than the slave morality that was to come, the solution is not a return to this starting point, but a move forward, a seeking of the *Übermensch*, or 'overman.'[34] Man – specifically the 'Last Men' of the modern age by Nietzsche's account – is something that must be overcome,[35] and if one should overcome such, they become an overman.[36] This is clear in Nietzsche's critique of the rise of consumer culture:

> The need to show that as the consumption of man and mankind become more and more economical and the 'machinery' of interests and services is integrated ever more intricately, a countermovement is inevitable. … it aims to bring to light a stronger species, a higher type that arises and preserves itself under different

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[32] An account which seems to mirror Hegel's account of the 'master-slave dialectic' insofar as for Nietzsche the master is the true source of consciousness and humanity, whereas the slave merely drags him down.
[33] See §5.2.(g) below for elaboration on the concept 'iron cage.'
[34] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 308-9. A concept which has a long history of misinterpretation, in part due to Nietzsche's sister (5-8), the common English translation of 'superman' is misleading, as the concept is first proposed by Zarathustra who teaches that "Man is something that should be overcome," whereas superman implies a greater version of what already exists (which for Nietzsche is the 'Last Men' trapped in their *ressentiment* – the intensification of which not being any kind of goal worth seeking).
[35] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 124, emphasis original. "*I teach you the overman*. Man is something which shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?"
[36] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 309.

> conditions from those of the average man. My concept, my metaphor for this type is … the word 'overman.'[37]

This overman does not represent a regression into the past, towards pre-mechanized industry and humanity; the animalic aspects of early man is not the overman's telos: "What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment."[38] Man is for Nietzsche a rope, "tied between beast and overman—a rope over an abyss. A dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping."[39] The crossing of this rope is something with a time-limit attached to it, however:

> The time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is still rich enough. But one day his soil will be poor and domesticated, and no tall tree will be able to grow in it. Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to whir! I say unto you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the *last man*.[40]

This 'last man' is the endpoint of the *ressentiment* of slave morality, where one's life is comfortable and safe; where "[e]verybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse."[41] The overcoming of the 'last men'[42] requires what

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[37] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1968), 463.
[38] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 124.
[39] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 126.
[40] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 129, emphasis in original.
[41] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 130.
[42] There are many interpretations of what the 'Last Men' means – as there are many interpretations of Nietzsche. Fukuyama (*The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006[1992]) for instance positions the concept opposite to the 'First Men' of various social contract theorists and romanticists. It represents for Fukuyama one of the consequences of the 'End of History' which he claims we now live in (or are moving towards), the Last Men are the 'victorious slaves' which fill the liberal democratic state (310). This 'absolute victory' of the slave denotes the end of all excellence, as excellence is an inherently aristocratic trait by Nietzsche account (314). For Kojève, the Last Men represented the consequence of Hegel's development of history, a "'re-animalisation' of humanity, with the human becoming merely a contented animal." (Lawrence S. Stepelevich, "Max Stirner and the Last Man," *Haythrop Journal,* 63, no. 4, [2022]: 822). Indeed, there are some who view the Last Men as not something to be overcome, but an ideal to be achieved, a 'happy end of history,' (Stepelevich, 2022). Robert B. Pippin (1993) points to the differential understanding of time (as either the cyclical 'eternal recurrence' of the Greeks and Nietzsche, or the progressive development of Hegel) as highlighting whether the Last Men represent a lazy, contented telos, or a 'lowest human' which by Nietzsche's account must be overcome; and Leo Strauss ("The Three Waves of Modernity," in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays*, (ed.) Leo Strauss, Hilail Gildin, [Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989]) presents such a case of a 'last man' which represents the consequence of not achieving the overcoming required for the *Übermensch*: "for Nietzsche the coming of the Over-man depends on man's free choice. Only one thing is certain for Nietzsche regarding the future: the end has come

Nietzsche describes as 'three metamorphoses of the spirit,' using the metaphors of the *camel*, the *lion*, and the *child*, metaphors which demonstrate the *hope* embedded in Nietzsche's work which does *not* carry over into Weber's apparently hopeless position.

The camel is "the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down" wishing to be "well loaded."[43] Such a spirit heads into a lonely desert where the second metamorphosis takes place: "here the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert."[44]The lion "seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god; for ultimate victory he wants to fight with the great dragon. … 'Thou shalt' is the name of the great dragon. But the spirit of the lion says, 'I will.' 'Thou shalt' lies in his way."[45] Here we can see the beginning of Nietzsche's overcoming – the assertion of one's will against the chains of slave morality. This is only the beginning, however:

> [W]hy is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough? To create new values—that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation—that is within the power of the lion. The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred 'No' even to duty—for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume the right to new values—that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much. … He once loved 'thou shalt' as most sacred … the lion is needed for such prey.[46]

The lion is the resistance against submission to the shackles of slave morality, it is the 'no!' against duty, it is the spark to birth new values by creating a freedom wherein they can breathe. Like with the 'bad' of noble morality,[47] this resistance is a *reaction*. But a reaction demanding space to give birth to a reinvigoration of the 'good' of such a morality. This 'no' is the putting down of one's foot, creating an eddy within which the child can be born:

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for man as he was hitherto; what will come is either the Over-man or the Last-man. The last man, the lowest and most decayed man, the herd man without any ideals and aspirations, but well fed, well clothed, well housed, well medicated by ordinary physicians and by psychiatrists is Marx's man of the future seen from an anti-Marxist point of view." (97). This stands in contrast to what I – and Kaufmann – have interpreted as a potential consequence of history, but one which can not only be avoided through overcoming, but can be overcome *post hoc*. As Nietzsche's eternal recurrence allows, *there can be no 'end of history'* in the manner of Kojève and Fukuyama.

[43] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 138.
[44] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 138.
[45] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 138-39.
[46] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 139.
[47] Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals," 40.

> Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes.' For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred 'Yes' is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who has been lost to the world now conquers his own world.[48]

Both the slave morality of the 'last men' and the possibility of overcoming extant in the spirit of the child can be seen influencing Weber's concepts of the iron cage of rationalization, the disenchantment of the world, and the possibilities which lie in charisma for overturning such cages and re-enchanting the world (for however brief a time).

All of this - the abyss which must be crossed between beasthood and overcoming, the move from a beast of burden to a creature capable of *opposing* with a 'no' and then a creature capable of *creating* with a 'yes;' overcoming the *ressentiment* which all of humanity wallows in - begins as a quest in the famous statement, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him."[49] This destruction of the divine is not as a simple as an atheistic worldview being born, but represents the end of meaning and the birth of nihilism:

> How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? … What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us—for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.[50]

All history since the birth of this nihilism adds up to nothing unless this nihilism can be overcome. But Nietzsche notes that the realization of this nihilism, of the *ressentiment* which dominates meaningless lives, is invisible to many:

> This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—*and yet they have done it themselves*.[51]

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[48] Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 139.
[49] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 181.
[50] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 181.
[51] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 182, emphasis in original.

The realization of the thing which must be overcome is for Nietzsche something which is yet to come. Despite the ominous nature of many of his descriptions and critiques, there exists in him a hope for the possibility of future overcoming.

5.1.(c) Linking Nietzsche and Weber

This hope is something which is not shared by Weber. While Nietzsche often is painted as a nihilist, Weber actually took up this mantle more fully (through his account of 'disenchantment'), leaving behind the hope for overcoming embedded in Nietzsche.[52] For Weber we are trapped in an iron cage of rationality, and even though he allows for brief 'overcomings' through charismatic leaders and movements, all charismatic authority eventually returns to tradition or legal-rationality.[53] In addition, all such 'overcomings' are more or less trapped upon the 'islands of normativity' which Weber has laid out as disconnected from one another, adrift in a sea of a-rationality. Despite this, we can see the Nietzschean influence in Weber's account of charisma.[54] As Nietzsche notes the necessary stages of the 'lion' and the 'child' in providing an rejection of the existing social order, and then a construction of something new, we see in Weber that "[c]harisma means a break with continuity, whether legal or traditional; it overturns institutions, it challenges the established order and customary restraints and appeals to a new concept of human relationships. *It is both destructive and constructive*."[55] Indeed, we can see Nietzsche's assertion of will present in the crossing of the abyss towards overcoming man in the charismatic leader, who "draws his legitimacy from sources within himself, independently of all external criteria."[56] The crossing of such abysses seems to represent from a Nietzschean perspective the possibility of bridging the gaps between the 'islands of normativity' which Weber describes, as well as overcoming the norms upon a given island.

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[52] Indeed, the loss of meaning which Weber focused on as a consequence of the rationalized world was typical of the nihilism of his generation following Nietzsche. See Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 246-47.
[53] Julien Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, (trans.) Mary Ilford, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1969), 243-44; Weber, "Domination and Stratification," in *Sociological Writings*, 32-46. These concepts are elaborated further in the following subsections.
[54] Weber's conception of charisma will be more fully elaborated in the coming section.
[55] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 233, emphasis added.
[56] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 233.

This represents a difference with Weber: charisma, despite often being a revolutionary means of overcoming, and "the most common means of overthrowing or eliminating a traditional or legal system,"[57] it is an overcoming *within a given sphere of value and normativity*, and thus unlike Nietzsche's idea of the *Übermensch*, it is always temporary:

> Since charisma creates an exceptional situation, the very principles of its authority become a source of difficulties if it is to produce anything more than an ephemeral revolt. … [S]uch is the fate of any authority of this kind; sooner or later, it returns to a traditional or legal form of government. … Thus the great problem of charismatic authority is that of succession.[58]

Charisma is doomed by Weber's account to fade. It serves as a catalyst in human history, but one which only eventually remakes a new tradition, or legal system.

There are two important points to make here between Nietzsche and Weber however: first, charisma for Weber is inherently beholden to the crowd – one is only charismatic *if* they receive the recognition and approval of the social space wherein they attempt to apply their charisma. While it might be easy to see the charismatic figure as expressing a will to power and overtaking the people around them, Nietzsche notes that praise and gratitude actually represent *assertions of the will to power*, that those who affirm the charisma of others "claim the right of being *able* to affirm, of being *able* to dispense honors," and that gratitude and affirmation represent a "virtuous revenge."[59] This shows that the charismatic figure of Weber represents the 'individual' which Nietzsche notes as merely representing a modest and unconscious form of the will to power.[60] Second, Nietzsche's account of the overman and the overcoming of the problems he describes in modern human society are individualist accounts, of a sort. The assertion of one's will in overcoming one's surrounding, in crossing the abyss, in the metamorphosis of one's spirit, all of this represents a *singularity,* an expression of *noble spirit*. Nietzsche distinguishes between *the individual* and *the person*, or the 'stronger' and 'strongest' type of man.[61] The *individual* seeks a

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[57] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 243.
[58] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 243-44.
[59] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 406-7, emphasis original.
[60] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 411-12.
[61] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 407, emphasis original. Nietzsche distinguishes between three levels of the will to power: the first blooming among the oppressed as a will to freedom; the second arising among the 'stronger kind of man,' as a will to overpower, which if it is unsuccessful limits itself to the 'will to justice' or equality with the ruling powers; and third forming among the strongest as a 'love of mankind,' as an "overpowering, bearing away with oneself, taking into one's service, as instinctive self-involvement with a great quantum of power to which one is able to give direction … it desires to overpower, to take possession, and it *appears* as self-surrender. Fundamentally it is

modest freedom from the overpowering domination of society, but in doing so merely seeks and produces an equalization wherein the totality of society is replaced by a totality of individuals: "He does not oppose [society] as a person but only as an individual; he represents all individuals against the totality. That means: he instinctively posits himself as equal to all other individuals; what he gains in this struggle he gains for himself not as a person but as a representative of individuals against the totality."[62] The noble *person* seeks not the power of others, imposed upon them in the form of praise, but holds a position of power wherein they see the world as full of instruments beholden to them, wherein they are not challenged and can develop a sense of love precisely because they need not worry of the threats of others.[63] The *Übermensch* is such a person – such a 'noble soul' - and so cannot, due to their overcoming of concern for the power of others, be placed parallel to Weber's conception of the charismatic figure.[64]

It is here that we can see one of the influences in the individualism which runs through both Nietzsche and Weber: one who seeks to *overcome the present* in the case of Nietzsche and seeks to cocoon themselves within a vocation to *protect themselves from the present* in the case of Weber. Their concerns are similar: the rationalized, bureaucratized system of modernity which drags the individual to the lowest possible level of skill and achievement. Their responses, however, are different – Nietzsche retains hope for 'crossing the abyss,' while Weber seems to focus upon the choice of sticking to a singular value sphere. Despite these differences, there is a shared individualism – for Nietzsche it is the overcoming of the *Übermensch* and for Weber it is the willful decision to adhere to a given vocation. MacIntyre, on the other hand, while sharing some of the critiques of Nietzsche and Weber, seeks to better understand the epistemic and moral narratives which make up the traditions which in turn make up the present social world, and in so

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only love of one's 'instrument,' of one's 'steed' –the conviction that this or that belongs to one becomes one is in a position to use it."

[62] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 411.

[63] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 407.

[64] It should be noted that *Übermenschen* could be considered charismatic, and followed by those 'beneath' them, but it would be of little concern to the *Übermensch.* However, it may represent an interesting area of future research to delineate between charismatic figures who act of their own will and those who maintain a continuous eye on how they are being interpreted by their followers.

doing retains a hope which is not over-individualized as in the case of Nietzsche, and which does not surrender to the social structures of the given day as Weber arguably does.[65]

This over-individualization can be seen in the way Nietzsche's 'overcoming' seems to result in an atomistic state, opposed to the 'masses' which make up the 'Last Men.'[66] Indeed, for Nietzsche the overman is not a form of hero-worship[67] – something which is often an essential element of the charismatic leader (as someone to be followed). Indeed, for Nietzsche anyone who seeks praise disempowers themselves by putting themselves at the mercy of the praise of others.[68] Unlike this, the overman does *not* seek followers, if anything they reject followers, as this would make them a figure embedded within the systems which Nietzsche is rejecting. As such, despite the shared individualistic element in Nietzsche and Weber, Nietzsche seems to fully reject the structure of values which exists (and by his eye, is in need of revaluation), whereas Weber seems to accept such structures by describing them and responding to them rather than attempting to overcome them. Indeed, Nietzsche might accuse Weber of going the way of the 'Last Man' by virtue of not trying to 'cross the abyss,' but rather by going along with the masses, no matter how critical Weber may be.

Weber, on the other hand, challenges Nietzsche in his own way. His account of charisma takes Nietzsche's ideas and test-runs them against the social world of his age, to see if the overcoming which Nietzsche claims is possible is indeed achievable. Weber would argue 'no,' given the constant return to traditional or legal-rational authority through the routinization of charisma.[69] Nietzsche might respond by claiming this is an example of eternal recurrence,[70] which

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[65] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 196-215. See also discussion MacIntyre's account of selfhood above in §2.7.

[66] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 312. "The unphilosophic and inartistic mass remain animalic, while the man who overcomes himself, sublimating his impulses, consecrates his passions, and giving style to his character, becomes truly human."

[67] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 313.

[68] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 406-7.

[69] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 243-44; Weber, "Domination and Stratification," in *Sociological Writings*, 32-46.

[70] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. Any revolution, any leader, will eventually dissolve into the standards of the day, however 'new' the standards are. Nietzsche saw history much as the Greeks did, insofar as there was an eternal recurrence of phenomena and persons. This is how he could claim that the "men of ancient Greece and of the Renaissance were far superior to his own contemporaries," (320). He denied that progress was infinite in a Darwinian sense (319-21), but rather that the overman was something that could have occurred in history prior to the present, and in the future as well. He even went so far as to note that eternal recurrence was the most scientific of possible hypotheses: "If science assumes a finite amount of energy in a finite space and an infinite

doesn't necessitate a nihilistic failure of charisma, but may actually provide the hope with which purpose can be attained in life. Nietzsche in his understanding of time precludes any 'end of history,' and any 'iron cage,' despite his critiques of the direction of morality and society. In some strange inversion, Nietzsche's lack of 'infinite progress' actually provides a hope for overcoming which Weber doesn't see in his nihilistic interpretation. Indeed, Weber's recognition of the 'infinite progress' of modern civilization ends in the nihilistic lack of "any ultimate purpose."[71]

Indeed, in Weber's account of disenchantment he identifies the loss of meaning and loss of freedom which typifies modern life,[72] from which we can see that "if not in the charisma of new leaders, only in the personality of the solitary individual" can this loss of meaning/freedom be opposed, and this "inner autonomy, which is to be heroically maintained, is threatened, because within modern society there is no longer any legitimate order that could guarantee the cultural reproduction of the corresponding value orientations."[73] The individual is trapped, as noted above, in a system which Nietzsche saw as something which could be overcome individually, but which Weber notes cannot be overcome. So, unlike Nietzsche's overman, we are at best trapped as the individual who finds purpose in their vocation,[74] or as what Nietzsche fears and opposes:

> No one knows who will live in that shell in the future. Perhaps new prophets will emerge, or powerful old ideas and ideals will be reborn at the end of this monstrous development. Or perhaps—if neither of these occurs—'Chinese' ossification, dressed up with a kind of desperate self-importance, will set in. Then, however, it might be truly said of the 'last men' in this cultural development: 'specialists

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time, it might follow that only a finite number of configurations of the power quanta were possible. In that case, either an end state must be reached or the same configurations must eventually be repeated and recur eternally. If an end state could be reached—and no beginning of time is posited—the end state must have been reached by now: but empirically that is not the case, and there is still change. Therefore, Nietzsche concluded, the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same—at great intervals—must be considered." (326). We can see the eternal recurrence of Nietzsche present in Weber's charismatic authority, as Nietzsche notes that "man as a species is not progressing. Higher types are indeed attained, but they do not last. … [and] The brief spell of beauty, or genius … is *sui generis*: such things are not inherited." (Nietzsche, as cited by Kaufmann, 328). This eternal recurrence is seen as a nihilistic phenomenon by Weber, "because in the context of modern civilization, with its theoretically infinite 'progress,' an individual's life necessarily lacks any ultimate purpose." (Weber, "The Scholar's Work," in *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, 18). See also Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 545-46, to see his connection between the eternal recurrence and the *übermensch*.

[71] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18.

[72] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 244-48.

[73] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 247.

[74] See section 7.2.(a) below.

> without spirit, hedonists without heart, these nonentities imagine they have attained a stage of humankind never before reached.'[75]

While there are many critiques of Weber's hopelessness,[76] he still maintained a certain moral position, but it was one which seemed perpetually tempered by the iron cage of rationality and the disenchanted, meaningless world which he saw himself and the rest of humanity in. With such an influence laid out it is important to dig further into the concepts which Weber builds in response to both Nietzsche and the world around him, and so we shall now turn to Weber's foundational contribution to sociological theory, methodology, and sociology as a discipline.

5.2. Weber's Theory, Methodology, and Understandings of Sociology

From Nietzsche and other influences, Weber proceeded to contribute to a range of sociological theory beyond this work's capacity to sufficiently account for. Focusing on what might be considered by some as a more 'detached' or 'adrift' collection of specific concepts might seem disorganized – indeed, given his focus on large-scale questions of traditions of thought, MacIntyre would likely critique it – but it is not altogether out of step with Weber's work itself. While there are important systematic elements to his work, he never completed the setting up of a 'system' of scientific thought.[77] In other words, systematic themes run through the concepts that Weber develops, but there isn't an *explicit* larger systematic theoretical project,[78] at least not in the same way that Durkheim attempted to develop one for sociology as a discipline. Despite this, later theorists like Wolfgang Schluchter have seen enough potential in these systematic elements to attempt to weave a more articulate Weber out of his corpus.[79]

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[75] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121. The use of the 'Chinese' here comes from the "association of Chinese history with immobility and petrification" which was a regular, racist phenomenon in 19th C. European thought (fn. 67).

[76] With Habermas being one such critic, see *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 248-71.

[77] Talcott Parsons, "Introduction," in *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (ed.) T. Parsons, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), 3.

[78] Given Weber's attempted division between his moral position and his scientific position, it is entirely possible that such a project could exist in the background or could have been something Weber was aiming at prior to his sudden death. Attention will be given to this below. See Parsons, "Introduction," 4-5.

[79] See for instance Wolfgang Schluchter, *Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Wolfgang Schluchter, *The Rise of Western Rationalism: Max Weber's Developmental History*, (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1981); Wolfgang Schluchter, "Dialectics and Disenchantment: A Weberian Look at Western Modernity," *Max Weber Studies*, 17, no. 1, (2017): 24-47; Christopher Adair-Toteff, "My 'Sociology': Wolfgang Schluchter on the History of Max Weber's Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft," *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 11, no. 4, (2011): 495-505. For a critical view of Schluchter, see Sandro Segre, "On Wolfgang Schluchter's Interpretation of Weber," *Max Weber Studies*, 13, no. 1, (2013): 65-80.

This section will look at the core theories of Weber's which we will be dealing with, and the influence they had on Weber's conception of sociology, namely a) *ideal-types*, b) *forms of authority*, c) *theories of social action*, d) *conceptions of sociology as a discipline*, e) *theory of rationalization*, f) *progress* and '*disenchantment*,' and g) *the 'iron cage.'* Once complete, we will move to Chapter 6 to look at Weber's 'moral' position, touching on his discussion of the fact/value distinction and the 'polytheism of values' before explicating how MacIntyre can be used as a critical partner in dialogue with Weber regarding his pedagogical concerns and ideas about 'vocations.'

5.2.(a) Ideal-Types

It seems appropriate to begin with the concept of 'ideal-types,' as it is foundational to many of Weber's ideas.[80] Many of Weber's typologies developed around definitions of types of action, types of social structures, conceptualizations of rationalization and its impact on the world, etc., are based on an ideal-typical bedrock. An ideal-type is, for Weber, an *abstract* and *general* concept. It is a tool, which is necessarily abstract and necessarily general, for making sense of the world around us. Describing its use in historical research, Weber notes that it aids in the conceptualization of complex systems which can never be 'seen' at any one given time or place:

> This conceptual pattern brings together certain relationships and events of historical life into a complex, which is conceived as an internally consistent system. Substantively, this construct in itself is like a utopia which has been arrived at by the analytical accentuation of certain elements of reality. Its relationship to the empirical data consists solely in the fact that where market-conditioned relationships of the type referred to by the abstract construct are discovered or suspect to exist in reality to some extent, we can make the characteristic features of this relationships pragmatically clear and understandable by reference to an ideal-type.[81]

Ideal-types represent a theoretical heuristic which allows for the expansion of social theory beyond the immediate description of a single moment in space or time.

The abstract nature of an ideal-type requires further elaboration, as it serves not only a heuristic role in expanding theorizing beyond the immediate moment, but also allowing for the

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[80] Parsons, "Introduction," 11-29.
[81] Max Weber, "Sociology and Science," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Hydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 263.

conceptualization of those systems which we cannot see *in-themselves*, which we can only see *elements of* in a given time or place – for example, 'the state,' or 'bureaucracy.' Beyond this, ideal-types allow for illuminating the comparative process between the real and the ideal in the understanding of both.

> An ideal-type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present, and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (*Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct (*Gedankenbild*) cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia. … research faces the tasks of determining, in each individual case, the extent to which this ideal-construct approximates to or diverges from reality…. [The theorist] as soon as he attempts to go beyond the bare establishment of concrete relationships and to determine the cultural significance of even the simplest individual event in order to 'characterize' it, must use concepts which are precisely and unambiguously definable only the form of ideal-types. Or are concepts such as 'individualism,' 'imperialism,' 'feudalism,' … and innumerable concepts of like character … constructed substantively by the 'presuppositionless' description of some concrete phenomenon, or through the abstract synthesis of those traits which are common to numerous concrete phenomena?[82]

From this we can see that Weber's concept of the ideal-type represents both a description of an already ongoing phenomenon in the way humans conceptualize the world, and an explicit theoretical tool for better understanding the bridge between the ideal and material realms.

5.2.(b) Forms of Authority

Within this conception of the ideal-type we can fit most of Weber's following conceptions in a way that makes sense, and which allow a sort of conceptual flexibility which might not be seen by some critics. For instance, Weber's typology of power,[83] especially of one of its forms in authority, is best understood in such an ideal-typical form. Weber broke authority down into three ideal-typical forms: *traditional authority, legal-rational authority,* and *charismatic authority*.[84] In the case of traditional authority, "obedience is accorded that individual empowered by the tradition

[82] Weber, "Science and Sociology," 263-66.
[83] Schneider, "Weber and Analytic Typologies," in *The Theory Primer*, 154-56.
[84] Max Weber, "Domination and Stratification," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Hydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 31.

who is (within its domain) bound to that tradition. Obedience is accorded on the basis of loyalty to the leader within the scope of custom."[85] Traditional authority thus

> draws its legitimacy not from reason or abstract rule but from its roots in the belief that it is ancient, that it has inherent and unassailable wisdom transcending any one man's reason. Its social essence is the direct personal relation between those affected: teacher to student, servant to master, disciple to religious leader, and so on.[86]

In the case of legal-rational authority, "obedience is accorded the legally prescribed technically impersonal order. This obedience is further accorded specific persons in whom authority is vested on the basis of the formal legitimacy of this legally prescribed order."[87] Legal-rational authority is

> characterized by bureaucracy, by rationalization of the personal relationships which are the substance of traditional society. … The emphasis is on the rules rather than on persons or on mores. The organization is supreme and, by its nature, strives toward increasing rationalization.[88]

And lastly, in the case of charismatic authority, "it is the charismatically qualified leader to whom obedience is accorded and on the basis of a personal trust in the leader's revelation, his heroism or his exemplary character within the parameters of the individual's willingness to believe in this charisma."[89] Charismatic authority is

> wielded by an individual who is able to show through revelation, magical power, or simply through boundless personal attraction, that he possesses charisma, a unique force of command that overrides in popular estimate all that is bequeathed by either tradition or law. … Revolution, whether religious or political, is the very essence of the exercise of charismatic leadership … [as it] cannot be by its very nature, stable and lasting.[90]

In this sense, Weber's account of charisma and MacIntyre's account of epistemological crises may represent interesting intersecting areas for dialogue given the role charisma can potentially play in

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[85] Weber, "Domination and Stratification," in *Sociological Writings*, 31.
[86] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 142.
[87] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 142.
[88] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 143.
[89] Weber, "Dominion and Stratification," 32.
[90] Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 143.

revolutionary responses to stagnated social structures, and how charisma – as noted above in §5.1.(c) – tends to always be temporary.[91]

From these three ideal-typical starting points many have critiqued the value of Weber's accounts of 'authority,' for example arguing Weber's definition is too broad or abstract. Parsons, for instance, notes in his engagement with Weber that he has essentially combined two different types, which "though often shading into each other, are analytically separate;"[92] these being the 'non-coercive authority' of technical expertise – exemplified in doctors, professors, and others to whom one must *choose* to submit – and the 'coercive authority' of bureaucratic offices, where hierarchical arrangement of authority is determined more by office than by knowledge.[93] This distinction has been taken up by others,[94] especially later theorists of expertise,[95] who have divided legal-rational authority into 'professional authority' ruled by expertise, and 'bureaucratic authority' ruled by office. I argue, however, that subdivisions of this type, proceeding on the assumption that Weber's typology has 'failed,' *themselves* fail to grasp the flexibility of the ideal-typical nature of Weber's typology of authority. For instance, as one will never find a perfect example of an ideal-type within a *particular instance*, assumptions that the ideal-types of 'traditional,' 'legal-rational,' and 'charismatic,' authority have 'failed' because we cannot see them fully within this or that instance is itself based on a common misunderstanding of ideal-types which undermines the value of the concept as applicable within sociology – whether theoretically or practically.

For example, a subdivision like Parsons' fails to allow for the conceptual flexibility to step back and see how both coercive bureaucratic and non-coercive professional authorities stem back to *authority based on a legal-rational understanding*. Both 'bureaucratic' and 'professional' authorities have basic standards of admission; both have differentiated levels of knowledge and

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[91] While this dialogue between Weber and MacIntyre is interesting, for the sake of space I will save expanding on it for future works.
[92] Parsons, "Introduction," in *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 58, fn. 4.
[93] Parsons, "Introduction," 59-60, fn. 4.
[94] Schneider, "Weber and Analytic Types," 158-60.
[95] See Anthony Giddens, "Fate, Risk and Security." In *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 109-143, (Stanford, CA: University of California Press, 1991); Nico Stehr and Reiner Grundmann, *Experts: The Knowledge and Power of Expertise*, (Suffolk, UK: Routledge, 2014); Werner Rammert, "The Rising Relevance of Non-Explicit Knowledge under a New Regime of Knowledge Production." In *The Governance of Knowledge*, 91-110. (ed.) Nico Stehr, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017); and Harry Collins and Robert Evans, *Rethinking Expertise*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009) to name a few.

office. Despite the 'company of equals' which Parsons notes in the Western University,[96] there are differentiations between professors in a single department in terms of *both* knowledge-through-experience and authority-through-office. This can be seen in the official authority (tenure, committee positions, seniority, etc.) and level of expertise (recognition within the academic community, publications, etc.) held by different department members. One can easily see the overlap between some of these examples: tenure coming (ideally) not merely from years of experience, but *also* from contribution to the academic realm and department. In this sense, we can see that whether we are approaching the case example of the professor from the perspective that they represent a non-coercive professional authority or a coercive bureaucratic authority, legal-rationality undergirds either position. This can be seen not merely in the overlap in subtypes of authority present within the professor, but also in the ways in which agents respond to this – and other types of – authority. Parsons argues that professional authority is non-coercive as one 'chooses' to submit to it, and to a certain extent this is true in the case of the professor, as one 'chooses' to attend university and their particular class, but if we expand our view to see the socio-economic pressures to attend university, and the bureaucratic pressures to attend a certain number of certain types of classes, we can see that the expertise of the professor is an authority shared with their bureaucratic authority. The professor thus represents both a coercive and non-coercive vector of authority.

Flipping this example on its head, we can see that even so-called coercive bureaucratic authority is something we to a large extend choose to submit to. Of course there are thing we can be physically forced to do (or not do). A road built in a particular manner largely forces our direction of travel along itself. Likewise, various institutions like the police and military can be used to force certain actions (or inactions). However, largely it is the *calculation of consequences* combined with a *consideration of values* which determines whether people *choose* to respond in concession to so-called coercive authority. Muhammad Ali represents an example of one whose values motivated his actions, and who calculated the consequences and still chose to act according, refusing conscription and serving a prison sentence. The authority was coercive in the sense that it could impose consequences, but not coercive in the sense that it could *actually* force him to take up a weapon and fight the Vietnamese. Likewise, a professor's supposedly non-coercive authority

[96] Parsons, "Introduction," 60, fn. 4.

actually follows a similar pattern: one can choose to not write their exam, being aware of the consequences to this action. The professor can impose all kinds of threat of consequence, attempting to coerce, but at the end of the day the agent can still choose not to submit to this coercion for whatever reason(s).

Parsons' critique of Weber is thus somewhat incoherent, as the distinction he makes between coercive and non-coercive authority is problematic: both types of authority have the ability to rely on coercion, but neither can *actually* force someone in an immediate sense, and both claim their authority in a legal-rational manner: the bureaucratic from his governmental position and its symbolic authority, and the professor from his pedagogical and academic position and its symbolic authority.

And so, we return to the ideal-type which Weber presents: a useful tool for helping to make sense of examples in the 'real world,' with acknowledgement of the fact that specific examples will always fall somewhere within and between ideal-types. With this in mind, critiques such as Parsons' are best viewed as examples of such 'reality overlaps,' rather than tangible critiques of ideal-types as theoretical concepts.

This is not to say that *specific elaborations on authority-type in a given instance* are uncalled for, but rather that there is nothing about the ideal-types (which such elaborations arguably stem from or build off) that *necessitates a conceptual subdivision of the ideal-types themselves*. There is, then, plenty of space to specify how legal-rational authority manifests itself differently in a bureaucracy than in a professional setting (as Schneider proposes) without needing to subdivide a concept which is inherently general. Weber himself clarifies his position when he states: "[t]hat none of these three ideal types … really occur historically in their pure form should certainly not prevent us from expressing them in as sharply focused a conceptual framework as possible," indeed, "it is by no means the author's viewpoint that a totalistic historical reality can be captured [solely in this] conceptual framework."[97] Specificity is not excluded from a Weberian sociology, Weber simply cements the need for general conceptual frameworks to act as foil against

[97] Weber, "Domination and Stratification," 32.

reality. This is in keeping with his historical idealist position which recognized the power of *both* ideas *and* the material world, with each being capable of influencing the other.

Ideal-types represent an area of partial agreement between Weber and MacIntyre stemming from MacIntyre's critique of the Enlightenment vision of the social sciences – a positivist vision which Weber likewise opposed. This apparent shared hermeneutic element is evident as both critique and attempt to move beyond positivist conceptions of social science, and each draws from historical and literary examples to get at the subject matter they are aiming at. Both, in essence, have a *hermeneutic flexibility* in their methodology. In Weber this is through flexible concepts such as ideal-types,[98] and his non-positivist methodology focused on *Verstehen*;[99] for MacIntyre this is his traditions-theoretic historical approach[100] allowing for the flexibility of reality to balance the otherwise firm philosophic positions[101] – what Weber might critique as 'ethics of conviction'[102]

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[98] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, (ed.) Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, (trans.) E. Fischoff, H. Gerth, A. M. Henderson, F. Kolegar, C. W. Mills, T. Parsons, M. Rheinstein, G. Roth, E. Shils, C. Wittich, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 20-21, 216. Weber notes this flexibility when initially applying the concept to his various 'ideal types of authority:' "The fact that none of these three ideal types … is usually to be found in historical cases in 'pure' form is naturally not a valid objection to attempting their conceptual formulation in the sharpest possible form. … Analysis in terms of sociological types has, after all, as compared with purely empirical historical investigation, certain advantages which should not be minimized. That is, it can in the particular case of a concrete form of authority determine what conforms to or approximates such types as 'charisma,' 'hereditary charisma,' 'the charisma of office,' 'patriarchy,' 'bureaucracy,' the authority of status groups, and in doing so can work with relatively unambiguous concepts." (216).

[99] Parsons, "Introduction," 9-11; Talcott Parsons (trans.), *Economy and Society: Volume 1,* 57, fn.3; Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1,* 13-15. There are actually a range of terms used by Weber beyond *Verstehen*, including *Deuten*, *Sinn*, *Handeln*, and *Verhalten*. They all have generally been summarized under the term *Verstehen* in English sociology but cover a range of concepts such as 'interpretation,' 'meaning,' 'understanding,' all of which are related to the "subjective states of mind and the meanings which can be imputed as intended by an actor." (57, fn. 3). Because of these essential elements of Weber's understanding of sociology as interpretive, it is inherently non-positivist – despite the otherwise scientific methodological elements Weber attempts to impose on sociology (13-14) – because of its focus on the subjective element of human life, as both a scholar studying and the subjects of study. This can be seen throughout his work but is especially present in his point that sociology "can accomplish something which is never attainable in the natural sciences, namely the subjective understanding of the action of the component individuals. The natural sciences on the other hand cannot do this … We do not 'understand' the behavior of cells, but can only observe the relevant functional relationships and generalize on the basis of these observations. … Subjective understanding is the specific characteristic of sociological knowledge." (15).

[100] Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 38-69; Reiss Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 73-79, 118-20.

[101] Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," 104. "The most that can ever be established is that accepting a certain tradition is rationally superior to accepting this or that other one, and all the ones comparatively evaluated *so far*. Thus, MacIntyre never entirely abandons his historicism. … [By adapting] the Kuhnian notion of 'epistemological crises,' MacIntyre suggests that it is possible for (at least) some of us, by wide study and deep reflection, to come to be in such a position, relative to our own and to some other moral tradition(s), that it may be rationally superior/preferable, even by our own criteria of rationality (C1), for us (people in group G1) to accept some tradition (T1) over another tradition (T2) in our social situation (S1) and temporal location (L1)."

[102] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 103-14.

- which are often demanded of ethics and epistemology; and both Weber and MacIntyre proceed in this fashion without needing to reduce their work to an application of a *Naturwissenschaften* methodology. Beyond this, there is a shared opposition to Orthodox Marxist positions which Weber was challenging in his attempt to balance the ideal and the material as areas of equal sociological concern.[103] MacIntyre also has moved beyond an overly materialist position,[104] but without falling into ethical trap which Weber has by relativizing values.[105]

5.2.(c) Theory of Social Action

Weber's focus on such abstract concepts as ideal-types, in their 'utopian' nature, does not prevent him from developing more applicable, non-utopian concepts, essential to any social scientific project. This theme in his work represents the methodological individualism within *Verstehende* sociology, which is seen in Weber's definition of social action as something which

> [I]ncludes both failure to act and passive acquiescence, may be oriented to the past, present, or expected future behaviour of others. ... The 'others' may be individual persons, and may be known to the actor as such, or may constitute an indefinite plurality and may be entirely unknown as individuals.[106]

Weber goes on to specify that not every kind of action – even overt action – is necessarily 'social' as presented:

> Overt action is nonsocial if it is oriented solely to the behavior of inanimate objects. Subjective attitudes constitute social action only so far as they are oriented to the behavior of others. For example, religious behavior is not social if it is simply a matter of contemplation or of solitary prayer.[107]

Orientation towards inanimate objects isn't the sole disqualifier of an action as being 'social.' Sociality is "rather confined to cases where the actor's behavior is meaningfully orientated to that of others."[108] Further, action is not social simply because it is the result of "the effect on the

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[103] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 122.
[104] Paul Blackridge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism: A Road not Taken," *Analyse & Kritik*, 30 (2008): 215-227. Blackridge catalogues MacIntyre's move away from a purely materialist position in the early 60s.
[105] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 25; Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 79-86; Weber, "Sociology and Science," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Hydebrand. (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 252-59; Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 30-32, 40-41.
[106] Max Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Hydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 1.
[107] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," in *Sociological Writings*, 1.
[108] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 2.

individual of the existence of a crowd as such" if that action "is not oriented to that fact on the level of meaning."[109] Because of this, simple imitation of the action of others – if it isn't meaningful – isn't considered social.[110] Such action would be *causally* determined by the action of others, but not *meaningfully* determined.[111]

This definition of social action, and its focus on meaningfulness, is a necessary starting point for Weber's interpretive project of sociology rather than sociology *qua* sociology.[112] This leads in turn to Weber's distinction between four types of social action: traditional action, which

> like the reactive type of imitation discussed … lies very close to the borderline of what can justifiably be called meaningfully oriented action, and indeed often on the other side. For it is very often a matter of almost automatic reaction to habitual stimuli … The great bulk of all everyday action to which people have become habitually accustomed approaches this type.[113]

Next, Weber presents affectual action, which also stands near the borderline noted above. Weber notes that when affectual action "occurs in the form of conscious release of emotional tension … it usually, though not always, [is] well on the road to rationalization" in either of the following forms (or both).[114] These following forms are action oriented in terms of an absolute value[115] (often called 'value-rational action') and action oriented to a system of discrete individual ends[116] (often called 'instrumental-rational' or 'purposive-rational' action).

Such conception(s) of social action by Weber's account help prevent the severing of "social structures and institutions from the multifarious activities of man, who both [build] them up and [endow] them with significance."[117] This central element of what Weber called 'meaningful relatedness' (*sinnhafte Bezogenheit*)[118] is present from the beginning of his theory through his entire methodology for the discipline. Ideal-types help frame sociological investigation, and act as

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[109] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 2.
[110] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 2-3.
[111] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 3.
[112] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 3.
[113] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 4. This borderline between *meaningful* and *habitual* that Weber draws is an interesting one of value when compared with MacIntyre's prereflective backgrounds, see §2.8 above. This represents an interesting area for future debate.
[114] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 4.
[115] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 4.
[116] Weber, "Social Action and Social Relationships," 5.
[117] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 88.
[118] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 89.

a tool to make sense of those spaces which can be considered 'social' by Weber's account insofar as they are meaningful. This leads to what has been called *Verstehen* or Interpretive Sociology.

5.2.(d) Sociology as a Discipline

While being raised in a Neo-Kantian tradition,[119] Weber was critical of the idealist philosophy of his day. Despite this, Weber still recognized the importance of ideas themselves in the development of material, political and further ideas throughout history.[120] Further to this, Weber noted that the divide between the methods of the *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* – as conceived in the Germany of his age – was perhaps more solid than it should be.[121] While he recognized the value of the subjective position in understanding social concepts – a recognition which lead to his emphasis of the importance of *Verstehen* to the study of social phenomena – Weber also sought to push back against becoming lost in that subjective moment. What we might call today subjectivism or relativism was encapsulated in Weber's day by the term 'historical,' where history was seen as series of "genetic sequence[s] as unique and incapable of comparison with any other; in particular radically to deny the relevance of generalized theoretical categories."[122] Against this, Weber posited what Habermas called a "cautiously universalistic position;"[123] that the subjective moment not only can be, but must be, encapsulated within such generalized theoretical categories to be made intelligible across history, exemplified above with such concepts as *ideal-types* and *meaningful relatedness*. While he explicitly divided political stance from academic position,[124] he also attempted "to envisage a liberal politics attuned to the

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[119] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 154. This is evident in even the late Weber as he continues to draw on the 'is/ought' distinction between statements of facts and judgments of value.
[120] Parsons, "Introduction," 6. It was in part a reaction to the Marxian historical materialist position that Weber cemented his more 'balanced' position which recognized the value of ideas, while remaining grounded in the material world. Weber was equally critical of Marx as he was of Hegel in this regard. See also Mark A. Schneider, "Max Weber and Capitalism," in *The Theory Primer: A Sociological Guide*, (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 138-40.
[121] Parsons, "Introduction," 9.
[122] Parsons, "Introduction," 9.
[123] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 155.
[124] Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon (eds.), *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, trans. Daimon Searls, (New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2020), xi-xii.

strictures of sociology."[125] This led to his being classified by some as a 'bourgeois sociologist' for his general endorsement of the strictures of science.[126]

Weber did not, however, fully swallow either the liberal,[127] or the positivist,[128] pill, and he pushed back against the assumption that scientific investigation can "attain a complete picture of the ontological reality of the phenomena."[129] Rather, he posited that "all empirical knowledge is in the nature of the case abstract. It never includes 'all the facts,'."[130] something we can see clearly in his conceptualization of ideal-types and the role they play in many of this theoretical typologies and concepts.[131] Much like how he sought to balance between the positions of materialism and idealism – often perceived dichotomously – Weber also sought to balance between positivist and relativist conceptions of the social sciences.[132] With this general layout of what Weber saw as problematic in both the *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*, what can we say of the place he sought to balance between these: sociology?

Sociology was, for Weber, "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects. In 'action' is included all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attached a subjective meaning to it."[133] This understanding shows a balance between the natural sciences – which sought causal explanation – and the human sciences – which sought appropriate description. This balance is possible in large part because the German concept *Wissenschaft* has often been mistranslated as 'science,' despite referring to any "systematic or cohesive body of knowledge."[134] Weber, from the beginning, did not conceive sociology, let alone the theories developed therein, as a 'science' - in the English sense - like more positivist theorists who critique Weber's historical 'causal

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[125] Keith Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow: Modernity, Subjectivity and Politics in Habermas, Arendt, and MacIntyre*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 16.
[126] Karl Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, (ed., trans.), Bryan S. Turner, Tom Bottomore, William Outhwaite, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 42.
[127] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 16.
[128] Parsons, "Introduction," 9-10.
[129] Parsons, "Introduction," 9.
[130] Parsons, "Introduction," 9.
[131] Max Weber, "Science and Sociology," 263-76.
[132] Parsons, "Introduction," 10
[133] Weber, *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 88.
[134] Daimon Searles (trans.), *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon (eds), (New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2020), xxxi.

narratives,' which do not aim at predictability, but rather at *Verstehen*.[135] Indeed, such positivist approaches to sociology are precisely one of the things Weber challenges, as he doesn't present an "implicit argument that an art historian or sociologist is really a kind of scientist."[136] Weber distinguishing sociology from the natural sciences in part by noting what can be accomplished by sociology that cannot be accomplished in the natural sciences,

> namely the subjective understanding of the action of the component individuals [which make up a social whole]. The natural sciences on the other hand cannot do this, being limited to the formulation of causal uniformities in objects and events and the explanation of individual facts by applying them. We do not 'understand' the behavior of cells, but can only observe the relevant functional relationships and generalize on the basis of these observations. This additional achievement of explanation by interpretive understanding, as distinguished from external observation, is of course attained only at a price—the more hypothetical and fragmentary character of results. Nevertheless, *subjective understanding is the specific characteristic of sociological knowledge*.[137]

This necessarily distinguishes sociological knowledge as well as sociological methodology from positivist methods which preclude any kind of subjective understanding. *Despite this distinguishing*, Weber also challenges the idea that the methods of the natural and social sciences were completely incompatible in the tendencies of his age, attempting to bridge the theoretical and methodological gap between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*.[138]

To achieve this, to balance between these positions, Weber sought the very thing some have come to criticize him for: *Verstehen*, often translated as 'interpretive understanding.' As with many translations of important concepts, elaboration is useful here. *Verstehen* primarily relates to the

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[135] Schneider, *The Theory Primer*, 31-35, 135-40.
[136] Searles (trans.), *Charisma and Disenchantment*, xxxii.
[137] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 15, emphasis added.
[138] Parsons, "Introduction," 8-11. "The tendency of Western positivistic thought was to identify [the] 'order of nature' with ontological reality as a whole. But this was not true of the tradition in which Weber was brought up. … [T]he tendency in Germany has been to emphasize the depth of the contrast, to hold that the methodological canons most characteristic of the natural sciences were in the nature of the case not applicable to the social-cultural and vice versa. … [T]his is the point at which Weber chose to make his principle attack. … His basic thesis in this [was] that generalized theoretical categories are as essential to the proof of causal relationships in the human and cultural field as they are in the natural sciences. … What Weber did was to take an enormous step in the direction of bridging the gap between the two types of science, and to make possible the treatment of social material in a systematic scientific manner rather than as an art."

> Observation and theoretical interpretation of the subjective 'states of mind' of actors. But it also extends to the grasp of the meaning of logical and other systems of symbols, a meaning which is usually thought of as in some sense 'intended' by a mind or intelligent being of some sort. The most important point about this concept seems … to be the fact that in so far as phenomena are 'understood' in this technical sense, the relevant facts are stated and analysed within a certain frame of reference, that of 'action.' For present purposes the most important feature of this frame of reference is its use of 'subjective categories.' The essential thing is the operational applicability of such categories, not the common sense empirical question of whether the actor is conscious of the meanings imputed to him or in the ordinary sense 'intended' a given course of action.[139]

So, while it is clear that the rational project of a 'scientific discipline' drives Weber in some ways, we can see that the interpretive and subjective element in his work pushes back, preventing a totalizing positivist project from taking over. Weber's rejection of positivistic models of social science derives from factual considerations of the multiple bases of intentionality in human action. However, we should not ignore Weber's value-commitments: Weber was wedded to the idea that, at least sometimes, action has its source in the agency of the individual themselves – the exact phenomena which he claims sociology can study which the natural sciences were methodologically and ontologically incapable of doing on their own. Indeed, a purely positivistic approach to the social sciences presents an ethical tension with questions of human agency and subjectivity – things which Weber states it is exactly sociology's purpose to access from a systematic position.

There is a parallel here between Weber's understanding of sociology as an interpretive project – and his critique of positivist understandings – and MacIntyre's understanding, and similar critiques of, the social sciences. MacIntyre critiques positivism in the philosophy of the social sciences which represents social science as providing a "stock of law-like generalizations with strong predictive power."[140] Rather, MacIntyre points out that social sciences cannot – by way of 'laws,' in the manner of the natural sciences – *predict*, only explain *post hoc*,[141] an analysis shared by many within the social sciences themselves.[142] This *unpredictability* has for MacIntyre a range

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[139] Parsons, *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 87, fn. 2.
[140] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 88.
[141] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 89.
[142] Immanuel Wallerstein, "For Science, Against Scientism: The Dilemmas of Contemporary Knowledge Production," in *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 7-15; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The End of Certainties in the Social Sciences," in *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*,

of sources, including the nature of radical conceptual innovation,[143] how the unpredictability of one's own future actions multiplies,[144] the unpredictability of the game-theoretic character of social life,[145] and lastly, pure contingency.[146] Despite these, there remains a range of *predictable* elements in social life, including the regularity of scheduling, statistical regularities, and knowledge about the causal regularities in nature and social life.[147] These predictable elements allow humans to "plan and engage in long-term projects," which are a "necessary condition of being able to find life meaningful."[148] Indeed, "[a] life lived from moment to moment, from episode to episode, unconnected by threads of large-scale intention, would lack the basis for many characteristically human institutions."[149] The interlocking of these predictable elements with sources of unpredictability throughout human life, however, "renders all our plans and projects permanently vulnerable and fragile."[150]

We can see the connections between MacIntyre and Weber in a range of ways here: Weber's account of sociology focuses on the individual experience on one hand, but also on the structural elements which make up society on the other (bureaucracy, etc.). Despite this apparent balance, Weber is always viewing these structural elements through the eyes of the individual in a manner that is both descriptive *and* critical – although critical in a fashion that often appears hopeless. MacIntyre, too, is critical and has an eye to the individual – his account of virtues is an account of, *and for*, the individual. MacIntyre also has an eye to a range of historical and social structural elements which make up the world, which is often critical. However, an important difference between Weber and MacIntyre is that Weber seems to stop short of balancing the connection between the individual and social structures – as noted above he reads these relationships through the eyes of the individual and stops there, leaving an unbalanced and often

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(Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 34-58; Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, (trans.) Mark Ritter, (London, UK: SAGE Publications, 1992), 51-84.

[143] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 93-95.
[144] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 95-97.
[145] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 97-99.
[146] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 99-100.
[147] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 102-3.
[148] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 103.
[149] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 103.
[150] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 103.

depressing view of the world. MacIntyre on the other hand takes a much more balanced approach, which can be seen in his account of predictability/unpredictability as well as elsewhere:

> Each of us, individually and as a member of particular social groups, seeks to embody his own plans and projects in the natural and social world. A condition of achieving this is to render as much of our natural and social environment as possible predictable and the importance of both natural and social science in our lives derives at least in part … from their contribution to this project. At the same time each of us … aspires to preserve his independence, his freedom, his creativity, and that inner reflection which plays so great a part in freedom and creativity, from invasion by others. ... We need to remain to some degree *opaque and unpredictable*, particularly when threatened by the predictive practices of others. … it is necessary, if life is to be meaningful, for us to be in possession of ourselves and not merely to be the creations of other people's projects, intentions and desires, and this requires unpredictability. We are thus involved in a world in which we are simultaneously trying to render the rest of society predictable and ourselves unpredictable.[151]

While a mouthful, we can see from MacIntyre here that he seeks to balance the structural and individual concerns, that social life is not a positivist realm of predictability *not only* because it *cannot be* – given the sources of unpredictability – but because it *must not be* – given the role unpredictability plays in the control and meaning one maintains over one's own life. In the former claim, we can see the influence of Hegel in MacIntyre,[152] and the latter we can see the influence of Nietzsche.

The question of (un)predictability is one we see explicitly in Weber's work through concepts like *bureaucracy* and the *rationalization* of society and the economy, as these are elements seeking to *rationally make predictable the world around us*. Weber sees these processes of rationalization as not being balanced by the individual concerns which MacIntyre notes above, but rather as 'taking over,' and here we can see the *fear* that underlies much of Weber's work when it comes to questions of rationalization and the 'disenchantment of society.'[153] A fear of the loss of

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[151] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 104, emphasis original.
[152] MacIntyre draws from Hegel's philosophy of history, among other philosophies of the social sciences, including his critiques of Karl Popper, to note the necessary unpredictability of the social-historical realm. See MacIntyre "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 85; MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150-53; MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 51-52; and MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 88-108, to demonstrate some of these themes.
[153] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 159. Habermas describes it well when he notes that the "understanding of the world generated by the sciences is the reference point of that universal-historical process of disenchantment."

individual autonomy, an ethical ideal which Weber maintains in the background throughout his work.

5.2.(e) Theory of Rationalization

Rationalization was for Weber not merely a process of humans becoming more capable of using reason. Indeed, rationalism

> means one thing if we think of the kind of rationalization the systematic thinker performs on the image of the world: an increasing theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise abstract concepts. Rationalism means another thing if we think of the methodical attainment of a definite, given, practical end by way of an increasingly precise calculation of the adequate means.[154]

Rationalization includes "every expansion of empirical knowledge, or predictive capacity, of instrumental and organizational mastery of empirical processes."[155] It was a process which – in an ideal-typical fashion – was made up of "a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present, and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena,"[156] but not reducible to any one of them. Unlike the Enlightenment view of reason as the saviour of humanity from the darkness of religion,[157] Weber did not see reason as inherently moral, nor did he see rationalization as an inherently moral project. Likewise, MacIntyre does not see rationalization – at least in its instrumental-rational form – as an effectively moral project (even if it is presented as such). Indeed, the division of rationality in the forms of action which Weber lists – instrumental-rational, value-rational, affectual, and traditional[158] – is part of the problem which makes it seem as though moral questions and rational questions cannot intersect. For Weber, these types of action represent a spectrum of ideal types which fall into the broad categories of rational and non-rational, with instrumental-rational and value-rational action making up the former and affectual and traditional action the latter. Despite this, Weber notes how it is easy for something which is value-rational to become irrational insofar as the "more unconditionally the actor devotes himself to this value for its own sake … the less is he influenced by considerations of the consequences of his action."[159]

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[154] Weber, as cited by Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 168.
[155] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 159.
[156] Weber, "Sociology and Science," 263.
[157] Olga E. Stoliarova, "The Charisma of Reason during the Re-enchantment of the World," *Social Epistemology*, (2021), 3.
[158] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 24-25.
[159] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 26.

Likewise, there are many instances of theoretical grey-zones developing based on tangible social and historical phenomena which diverge from, or intersect between, these ideal-types.[160] While there are all these different types of action, Weber notes how instrumental-rationality has begun to dominate further and further since the Enlightenment and the birth of capitalism.[161]

While MacIntyre is as critical of the Enlightenment project of rationality as Weber is, MacIntyre sees rationality as a holistic concept which can be salvaged,[162] whereas Weber sees it as a phenomenon which has been shattered into component parts which cannot be recombined. This is obvious in Weber's distinction between facts and values and can also be seen in his account of the rationalization of art.[163] While science and scientific ventures represent an obvious area of rationalization, rationalization is a process for Weber which is *archetypally modern*, impacting the economy, politics, *Wissenschaften*, and aesthetics. Like Adorno after him,[164] Weber's differentiation between facts and values can be seen in his account of aesthetics, as it is not the "independent aesthetic values" but the "material mastery of art production," i.e., *the techniques* of art which are subject to rationalization.[165] It is because of this fact/value distinction that an art historian could make a solid claim about the technical progress throughout the history of art, but *not* a solid claim about any parallel value progress.[166]

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[160] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 25-26.
[161] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 22, 26-28, 93, 241, 277, 359-65. Present throughout The Protestant Ethic in Weber's discussion of both rationality and calculability and their contributions to the 'capitalist spirit.'
[162] In keeping with Jay's account of earlier understandings of rationality; with noetic and dianoetic forms being distinct, but remaining part of a larger holistic concept. See Martin Jay, *Reason After its Eclipse: On Late Critical Theory*, (Madison, WC: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), 14-16.
[163] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 160.
[164] Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered," in *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 419; Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (eds.), *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 398.
[165] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 160; see also Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," in *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (eds.) C. Calhoun, J. Gerteis, J. Moody, S. Pfaff, and I. Virk, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2012), 447: "what I have called the project of modernity only comes into clear view when we abandon the usual concentration on art. Max Weber characterized cultural modernity in terms of a separation of substantive reason … into three moments, now capable of being connected only formally with one another. … the perspectives of truth, normative rightness and authenticity or beauty … can now be treated in each case as questions of knowledge, justice or taste respectively, … [as] value spheres of science and knowledge, of morality and of art."
[166] Adorno, as cited by Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 161. "Such unmistakable progress is [however] not automatically progress in quality. One would have to be blind to deny the gains in means of painting from Giotto and Cimabue to Piero de la Francesca; but to infer from this that Piero's paintings were better than the frescos of Assisi would be pedantic."

This 'technical element' helps show how rationalization can impact all of human society by Weber's account – because all elements of society have technical elements attached to them: "[e]very rule or system of rules that permits reliably reproducible action, whether methodical or customary, that can be predicted by participants in interaction and calculated from the perspective of the observer, is a technique in this sense."[167] Many examples are listed by Weber including techniques of prayer, asceticism, thought, research, memorizing, education, exercising domination, making love, making war, musical performance, painting, arriving at a legal decision, etc.[168] Indeed, it is precisely because technique plays such a core role in human society that this range of phenomena are justifiably subjects of sociological investigation - as they are all impacted by rationalization. Weber's differentiation between the phenomena and its technical aspects is also a differentiation between *accounts of progress* in relation to the phenomena and its technical aspects:

> If we consider only means with which an acting subject can realize set ends through intervention in the objective world, the evaluative criterion of success comes into play. The rationality of employing means is measured by the objectively testable efficacy of an intervention … This permits us to distinguish between 'subjectively purposive-rational' and 'objectively correct' actions. We can also speak of a 'progressive rationality of means' in an objective sense.[169]

This distinction allows for an account of 'progress,' but one which is not as universal as those laid out by Enlightenment thinkers.[170] The disconnect between the 'subjective' and 'objective' elements here shows how rationalization led to what Weber called an 'iron cage' – discussed below. The 'constant state of progress,' perceived in both moral and practical senses by Enlightenment

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[167] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 169.
[168] Weber, as cited by Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 169.
[169] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 169.
[170] Olga E. Stoliarova, "The Charisma of Reason during the Re-Enchantment of the World," *Social Epistemology*, (2021), 3-4. Weber's account of progress is very much an account of the way a rationalized world conceptualized progress, something which inherently leads to a disenchanted world. This is challenged by what Stoliarova notes as the 'complexification' of history by science, a non-linear, not-necessarily-unidirectional development of ideas which – unlike the Enlightenment or rationalized concept of 'progress' – is not entirely in the hands of 'the rational subject.' The 're-enchantment of the world' is a phenomenon which seems to have developed parallel to this complexification, and seems to parallel Giddens' and Beck's accounts of *risk* as a phenomenon which cannot be brought under the control of rationalization, flying in the face of the assumptions of the Enlightenment where all aspects of the universe could be mastered by the rational subject.

thinkers, is in fact only progressing in a *technical* sense,[171] even if such processes are not always linear.[172]

Reason did not, for Weber, represent either a means aimed towards some universally enlightened historical telos, nor did it represent an end-in-itself as some Enlightenment thinkers believed.[173] Reason was merely a tool – a *technical* consideration - and one which Weber argued we had reified into something which had power over us through the process of rationalization and intellectualization:

> [Which] might be defined as the organization of life through a division and coordination of activities on the basis of an exact study of men's relations with each other, with their tools and their environment, for the purpose of achieving greater efficiency and productivity. Hence it is a purely practical development brought about by man's technological genius. Weber also described rationalization as a striving for perfection … as an ingenious refinement of the conduct of life and the attainment of the increasing mastery over the external world.[174]

This process – and rationalization is precisely that, an ongoing process rather than a static state – helps enable the domination of instrumental rationality. What once was a means towards ethical or social ends now became an empty end-in-itself with no direction or purpose beyond further instrumentalization,[175] or as Habermas describes it, the "progressive differentiation of science and knowledge, morality and art … implies *both* the specialized treatment of special domains *and* their detachment from the current tradition … This detachment is the problem which is generated by the autonomous logic of the differentiated value spheres."[176] The isolation of different value spheres, as described by Weber, necessarily reduces each value sphere to purely instrumental questions, or at least understandings of progress, internal to a given sphere, which are progressive *only* in an instrumental sense – leaving potential for progress through the comparative overlapping

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[171] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume One*, 170.
[172] Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," 447-48.
[173] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 19.
[174] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 18.
[175] Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 68. "That which was originally a mere means (to an otherwise valuable end) becomes itself an end or an end in itself. In this way, means as ends make themselves independent and thus lose their original 'meaning' or purpose, that is, they lose their original purposive rationality oriented to man and his needs. This reversal marks the whole of modern civilisation, whose arrangements, institutions and activities are so 'rationalised' that whereas humanity once established itself within them, now it is they which enclose and determine humanity like an 'iron cage'. Human conduct, from which these institutions originally arose, must now in turn adapt to its own creation which has escaped the control of its creator."
[176] Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," 448.

of moral, epistemic, and aesthetic questions impossible, given the specialization within each value sphere,[177] something which MacIntyre provides the theoretical tools to undertake in his traditions-theoretic work.

5.2.(f) Progress and 'Disenchantment'

Weber gives the example of how scientific progress represents a core function of this process, noting how

> Those of us who took the streetcar here have no idea how it runs, unless we happen to be physicists or engineers. Nor do we need to know. It's enough that we can 'count on' the streetcar working and can behave accordingly. We couldn't even begin to actually build a tram that move and carry people around town. The savage knows incomparably more about his tools.[178]

Weber goes on to state that increasing intellectualization and rationalization "*does not*, in other words, mean a greater general knowledge of the conditions we live under" but rather that we have a belief that we can learn anything at any time, at least in principle. It means that "in principle there are not mysterious incalculable forces intervening in our lives, but instead all things, in theory, can be *mastered* through *calculation*."[179] Here we can see Weber's contrast between the world of complete calculability and what might be considered by Enlightenment thinkers as a 'dark world' of religions, but one which Weber inversely describes as 'enchanted.'

While some Enlightenment thinkers might see such 'disenchantment' in a positive light[180] – indeed as an essential process in human development – Weber identifies some of the negative consequences of such a process of rationalization and disenchantment in addition to the surface-level positive elements.[181] For him, disenchantment includes, but is not limited to, the

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[177] Habermas, "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," 448. "Karl Popper … holds firmly to the potentially enlightening capacity of scientific criticism … [but] for this he pays the price of a general moral scepticism and a largely indifferent attitude to the aesthetic dimension. … In Adorno, on the other hand, the emphatic claim to reason has withdrawn into the accusatory gesture of the esoteric world of art, morality no longer appears susceptible to justification, and philosophy is left solely with the task of revealing, in an indirect fashion, the critical content sealed up within art."

[178] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 17.

[179] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18, emphasis original.

[180] Evidenced for instance in the positivism of Auguste Comte. See Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 15-16, 56, 58-61, 182, 226-29, 273.

[181] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 15. Breen puts it well by stating that disenchantment "is embraced, for it means escape from illusions, explaining why Weber admired the Puritan's rigorous asceticism and determination to view the world unadorned. But these are at best ambiguous successes. … Specialization certainly contributes to real advancement of cultural logics, but it also means the impossibility of living a meaningfully whole or integrated life."

'demagification' of society, but it goes beyond this.[182] Disenchantment also aims at the elimination of risk and the incalculable forces of the world – no longer are there things which seem to be beyond or outside human control, at least potentially.[183] While this may on the surface appear as something positive, we can see from the later works of Giddens, Beck, and others that the 'apparent elimination of risk' only ill-prepares us from the risks 'beyond the horizon.'[184] Disenchantment not only represents an elimination of the 'magical' or 'uncontrollable' elements of pre-Enlightenment societies, but also

> [T]he disappearance of moral certainty, the loss of 'objectivities' around which one could mould one's life. Whereas 'mechanized petrification' refers to the formalized social structures in which people find themselves, disenchantment concerns the effect of a polyvocal rationalization process on their personalities. The one designates the triumph of a single rationalization strand, the other the … splitting up of reason itself.[185]

Through this process of disenchantment instrumental rationality undermines and collapses any conception of an Enlightenment project of reason. The consequence of this is perhaps best noted in Weber's conception of the 'iron cage.'

The *process of rationalization* Weber describes is thus a description of both a hubristic process which seeks to overcome risk and the unknown in the world (which it cannot),[186] and the dominating influence rationalization has upon human life. This is one location, however, where Weber's division of facts and values leaves him theoretically vulnerable. While Weber can *logically critique* the former of these processes, and *describe* this process of domination, he is incapable of *morally* critiquing it. MacIntyre, on the other hand, is capable of both describing and critiquing the process of rationalization and the moral and rational domination that comes with it.

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[182] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 14.
[183] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18-19.
[184] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (Stanford, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 109-143; Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Trans. Mark Ritter, (London, UK: SAGE Publications, 1992), 51-84; Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 31.
[185] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 14. Others have noted how the division of a general concept of 'reason' into what Weber distinguishes is something which has been underway for a long time, and which also leads to an understanding of non-rational elements of contemporary life which in previous ages would be viewed as rational, even if not instrumental-rational. For instance, the distinction between *noetic* and *dianoetic* rationality – all under a larger understanding of 'reason.' See Jay, *Reason After its Eclipse*, 3-35.
[186] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18, emphasis original. Weber notes how even thought it cannot necessarily bend the unknowns of the world to its will, rationalization creates the belief that "we *could* find out if we *wanted* to; that in principle there are no mysterious incalculable forces intervening in our lives, but instead all things, in theory, can be *mastered* through *calculation*."

This will be elaborated on below, before this a sufficient description of Weber's concept of the 'iron cage' must be given.

5.2.(g) The 'Iron Cage'

The 'iron cage'[187] is initially deployed when describing the consequence of the rational development of capitalism within *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*. Weber describes the Puritan belief that physical possessions should be of little concern to an individual, that they should represent a "thin cloak which can be thrown off at any time."[188] Weber notes ominously that fate has "decreed that the cloak should become a shell as hard as steel [*stahlhartes Gehäuse*] … [with] the outward goods of this world gain[ing] increasing and finally inescapable power over men, as never before in history."[189] This sense of being trapped by an 'iron cage' is not merely a critique of capitalism for Weber, but a critique of the underlying process of rationalization which undergirds capitalism and many other modern phenomena, including, but not limited to, bureaucratization and the instrumentalization and over-specialization of science.[190] As noted above, this is an attempted critique of the dominating element of rationalization, however it is one which is hollow, insofar as there is no moral grounding for the critique. Weber attempts to present a (weak) moral critique of a rational problem by making describing the consequences thereof in an ominous manner: "[e]ven the optimistic mood of asceticism's laughing heir, the Enlightenment, seems destined to fade away, and the idea of the 'duty of a calling' haunts our lives like the ghost of once-held religious beliefs."[191] We are trapped, by Weber's account, by the rationalized shackles which *we ourselves have made*, directed towards an *aimless*, *amoral* understanding of 'progress' which seeks only to – in the form of capitalism – satisfy "elemental passions" and "sporting contest[s]."[192] Rationalization thus does not simply aim at instrumental-rational progress,[193] but it

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[187] *Stahlhartes Gehäuse* is better translated as 'steel shell' or 'steel casing,' to encompass the human-made and irremovable elements of this state. See Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells, "Note on the Translation," in *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism and Other Writings*, (eds., trans.) P. Baehr and G. C. Wells, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2002), lxx-lxxi.
[188] Baxter, as cited by Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121.
[189] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121.
[190] Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 282-83. See also Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 62-64; Schneider, "Weber and Analytic Typologies," 179.
[191] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121.
[192] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121.
[193] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 22

actually leads to *an increase in irrationality*[194] as reason becomes more siloed in its applicable realms and less capable of grasping – or allowing those who deploy it to grasp[195] – the larger, interconnected spaces which connect such realms. Indeed, this represents another distinct feature of rationalization: the differentiation of distinct realms of organized knowledge,[196] something clearly exemplified by Weber when he notes the over-specialization of academic disciplines, and the necessity of 'academic dilettantes' to bridge these gaps.[197]

This rationalization has led to the illusion – taken up by many – of a battle won without ever have been fought. Namely, that science as a project has already answered the question of why one ought to pursue it, and what meaning comes out of it. The values to which one directs scientific work are assumed or ignored by most. Weber notes well that the natural sciences tend to cause 'meaning' to die out at its roots in the universe. He identifies how questions like 'whether and when life is worth living' are not asked by disciplines like medicine, and how

> [e]very natural science answers the question "What should we do *if* we want to *use the techniques at our disposal* to control life? While leaving unanswered, even unasked, simply taken for granted, whether we *should* control life through technology, whether we *want* to, and whether it's ultimately *meaningful* to do so.[198]

The inherently instrumental nature of science is a sign of science being a rationalized project in the manner that Weber speaks of rationalization. This rationalization impacts systems, institutions, and individuals, as noted when Weber makes the point that for the rationalized subject, death itself ceases to have meaning:

> In the context of modern civilization, with its theoretically infinite 'progress,' an individual life necessarily lacks any ultimate purpose. There is always another step to take on the path of progress; no one dies at the peak or end of his journey, because the path continues into infinity. … A person in our culture … in a civilization

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[194] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 25.
[195] Indeed, even the phrasing 'those who deploy it' takes it strictly as a means, as a tool, rather than as anything between or beyond means and ends.
[196] I've chosen the term 'organized knowledge' here rather than perhaps 'practices,' 'actions,' or some other terms for two major reasons. First, these are concepts with clear definitions used by MacIntyre and Weber, and so I seek to avoid confusion. Second, these concepts are *actional*, whereas 'organized knowledge' gets at the *potentiality* of as-of-yet-unused, or *undeployed* knowledge which makes up a large part of any academic, or epistemically specialized, realm.
[197] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 11, 17-18.
[198] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 25, emphasis original.

> perpetually being enriched with ideas and information and problems, might become 'tired of life' but can never be fulfilled by it, never be 'full of' his years.[199]

Progress, when aimless and shackled by instrumentality – progress without a telos, which is the state of modern man and science for Weber – saps meaning from both life and death.[200]

While this may seem a fully hopeless diagnosis of the modern condition,[201] Weber responds – at least in some manner – in a way that rejects a complete collapse into nihilism. Influenced by Nietzsche and others (discussed above), Weber argues that one must *willfully decide between* which values to direct instrumental rationality. While there seems to be no permanent way to determine between what Weber called the 'polytheism' of inherently antagonistic values,[202] temporary determinations of such values are – at least *in principle* – still *potentially rational* determinations, insofar as the basis of the choice between values is rational, even if subsequent commitment to a value is beyond discussion.[203] This problem is critiqued by both critical theorists[204] and MacIntyre, who's theory of traditions of inquiry problematizes the surrender that Weber presents around 'how justified' one is in choosing between values.[205] Weber's decision making process is Nietzschean in that it is overly-willful: simply pick a position and stick with it. There is no way to judge a better/worse decision except by virtue of the vocation one has committed oneself to, a commitment which is not determined by rationality or ethics. Thus, judgment is an act of willful obligation to the vocational path one has committed oneself, not an act stemming from attempted maximal rationalization. Here we can see the divergence between Weber's account of the instrumental-rationalization of modern society – which one would consider pointing us towards

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[199] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18-19.
[200] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 19.
[201] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 15. Breen frames Weber's description well when he says "[t]he ordeal faced by modern men and women is having to endure the 'inner loneliness', insecurity of values and alienating impersonality defining the modern age."
[202] Weber, "A Scholar's Work," 30-32; see also Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 27-28.
[203] Wolf Heydebrand, "Introduction," in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) W. Hydebrand, (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), x.
[204] See Jay, *Reason after Its Eclipse*, 81-113, for a brief summary of various responses to the domination of instrumental reason by critical theorists of various stripes.
[205] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 7-11, 164-82, 367. MacIntyre notes variously how the world is indeed made up of a range of traditions which may seem at first completely divorced from one another in terms of frames of reference – whether historical, narrative, linguistic, ethical, etc. However, such traditions are not the final theoretical 'step back' which one must take – arguably a 'step back' which Weber *doesn't* take – rather one must step *further* back to see how different traditions *can* be compared, and problems can be identified and *resolved* between and within them. Something which Weber might see as possible in a purely instrumental-rational manner, but not in relation to questions of morals or values.

a rational utilitarianism determining our actions – and non-rational willfulness enacted in the choosing and maintaining one's own vocational telos. This represents both an area of critique which MacIntyre has of Weber, as well as a similarity between the two. While Weber focuses on the rational and rationalized elements of human life within given social spheres, anything outside a given sphere is inherently non-rational. This is not unlike MacIntyre, except MacIntyre argues that one cannot be fully outside tradition(s) – although one of his critiques of liberal modernity is that it has become a space of disparate and hollow remnants of traditions which no one is aware of or participating in, and so while it isn't non-rational in the manner of Weber's extra-spheric descriptions, it is damned confusing, as no one has any means of deciding between traditions of rationality because they have no coherent tools to understand the world.

Despite the potentially rational element within Weber's account of various value spheres, one appears to remain trapped between two possible solutions to this 'value-relativist'[206] position: "either to go back to the tranquillity of the old churches, or to face the future with courage,"[207] the former a position where Weber chides "those romantics and religious who yield to irrational sensualism or worn Church dogmas. Praying futilely for prophets in a prophetless time, their 'intellectual sacrifice' guiltily refus[ing] to affirm the cold reality that mature personalities embrace."[208] Weber is essentially left an "individualist undecided between two types of activity: the Promethean and the Epimethean."[209] Here we can see again the influence of Nietzsche, but with his Promethean struggle of self-overcoming and assertion of one's will tempered by a perhaps less prophetic,[210] more *realpolitik*,[211] approach – which makes sense given both the scientific (albeit

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[206] Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, 55-56.
[207] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 24.
[208] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 16.
[209] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 24.
[210] Bryan S. Turner, "Preface," in *Max Weber and Karl Marx,* (ed. and trans.) Bryan S. Turner, Tom Bottomore, and William Outhwaite, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 18. Weber was "reluctant to accept [the] logical implications [from Nietzsche's perspectivism] that all social science propositions about 'social reality' were purely provisional approximations and that they were products of the particular presuppositions of the scientist."
[211] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow*, 16, emphasis added. The political realism which Weber adopted had "nothing to do with 'metaphysical' or 'moral' realism, the claim that the universe is directly knowable or that our moral beliefs have an objective status; rather, *it refers to the assumption that politics is a realm of warring interests where truth and morality play a minor role*." Further to this, Weber views the 'facts' of the social and political realms as "essentially coercive means to any number of good and evil ends, politics is defined not by justice or virtue but by a timeless dominion of man over man."

interpretive-scientific) project Weber was embarked on,[212] and the Prussian state he lived under.[213] The concretization of Weber's epistemic and methodological position led in turn to a rather undecided moral position. His descriptions of, and responses to, the social and historical world in which he lived, while articulate and in many ways still valuable to this day, left the moral space of assertion void, and it is to investigate this – and the role the concept of 'vocations' play in Weber's response to this – that we now turn.

[212] Parsons, "Introduction," 8-29; Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon, "Introduction," in *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, (eds.) P. Reitter and C. Wellmon, (trans.) D. Searls, (New York, NY: New York Review of Books, 2020), viii-xiv.
[213] Parsons, "Introduction," 5.

Chapter 6: Drawing Weber into Dialogue with Macintyre

6.1. Weber's 'Moral' Position

Despite his seeming position of moral hopelessness, Weber proceeded to develop an ethic out of this location, which Reitter and Wellmon described as "[r]ecognizing the amoral actuality of the world—that no moral order will be revealed, that no providential good will be made manifest, that no reason will work through history to reconcile moral conflicts—[this] is the beginning of ethical responsibility for both the politician and the scholar."[1] This impossibility of singular morality, this 'polytheism of values'[2] which Weber felt himself to be cast adrift within, appears to have resulted in the aforementioned hopelessness.[3] Weber did not respond as *some* nihilists however, and despite his lack of hope, he articulated several positions which represented a pseudo-Nietzschean assertion of will, raging against the dying light of hope, to keep one sane in an insane (or perhaps *hyper*sane[4]) world. This is clear in the 'bubble' of rationality Weber posits in the form of the 'vocational position' which scholars and politicians ought to – by his account – take, as means to brace one against the "different value systems in the world [that] are in irresolvable conflict."[5] The idea of a vocation for Weber seems to represent a disenchanted version of 'the calling' given in his account of the religious influences on capitalism.[6] Indeed, for Weber, despite his claim that the sciences

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[1] Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon (eds), "Introduction," in *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*, xxiii.

[2] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 30-32, emphasis in original. "If your starting point is purely experience, you will end up with polytheism. … I have no idea how anyone could give a 'scholarly,' 'scientific' proof that French culture is *worth more* than German culture or vice versa." (30).

[3] One could easily argue that a circularity of influence existed here, with the hopelessness of other phenomenon influencing this, which impacted Weber's understanding of the polytheism of values – or the apparent polytheism of values influencing his hopelessnesss – or both simultaneously playing into one another.

[4] George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2004), 134-58. One could easily posit that the irrationality of rationalization is parallel to the insanity of the 'sanity' which the rationalized world asserts is the bread and butter of the modern everyday. Much like Ritzer argues the rational aspects of the rationalized world have reached a point where they are *so* rational that they become irrational, my use of the term 'hypersane' here aims at paralleling this: the sanity asserted by the rationalized world has reached a point where it is *too* sane, with insane consequences.

[5] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 30.

[6] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121. See also Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 257, (emphasis in original). While many have critiqued Weber's account in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Nisbet identifies a depth and specificity that many overlook, with it having "been honored by countless articles, reviews, and books 'disproving' its thesis. Not often, however, have the critics kept steadily in mind the limits that Weber himself placed on the argument and implications of the book. *The Protestant Ethic* does *not*—and this point cannot be overemphasized—declare capitalism to the be the result of either Protestantism generally or Calvinism specifically. Weber was much too sophisticated a methodologist to have made such a claim for any element, material or immaterial. What he does in this remarkable book is succinctly summarized as follows: '*One of*

have no external meaning, only internal, pragmatic meanings,[7] he seems to reinvigorate the meaning within the now disenchanted 'calling' in the form of a 'vocation.'

Such a vocation is seen by Weber – in the case of scholarship - as a sort of 'calling' to a "hyperspecialized, never-ending enterprise."[8] This specialization is not only a case of the subject-matter attached to the scholarly area of focus, but is a moral and political boundary too, where teachers ought not to represent their political positions in the classroom,[9] nor attempt to act as leaders for the students in either moral or political manners.[10] The encapsulating nature of such a vocation represents in some way Weber's moral position of amorality, where politics must be divorced from scholarship.[11] While scholarship can account for *consequences*,[12] it cannot decide between ends,[13] and because this is the subject matter of politics (convincing people of different ends), politics must remain divorced from scholarship.[14]

Despite this idea of scholarship as a vocation seeming to brace one against the maelstrom of ends which Weber claims cannot be decided between rationally, he is still

> [a]ware of the loss involved in this devotion, [and] stubbornly insists nothing else can conscionable be done, chiding those romantics and religious who yield to irrational sensualism or worn Church dogmas. Praying futilely for prophets in a

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the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only of that but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born—that is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate—form the spirit of Christian asceticism.' Does Weber deny in this book the influence of money, of trade, of technology, political centralization, legal rationalization, secularism, luxury, [etc.]? He does not. All of these in varying degrees have been essential."

[7] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 24. "The natural sciences … take it as perfectly obvious that the ultimate laws of the universe, comprehensible as far as science goes, are worth knowing … 'for its own sake.' Now, clearly this assumption cannot be proved. … [A]nd whether living in such a world is meaningful—cannot be proved either. Science doesn't try."

[8] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 17.

[9] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 26-28.

[10] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 32-34.

[11] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 26. "[P]olitics does not belong in the lecture hall." See also Freund, (1969): 79-86.

[12] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 35, emphasis original. "We scholars can, and should, tell you that this or that practical stance can be derived logically … in terms of its *meaning*, form this or that fundamental worldview … but *not* from this other one. To speak in images: If you decide to take this stance, you will serve this god and *offend this other god*, for if you remain true to yourself, you will necessarily arrive logically at such and such meaningful *consequences*."

[13] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 35, emphasis original. "*If* you take this or that position, science and scholarship show that you must use this or that *means* to help your position prevail in practice. … [T]he main thing tends to be provided: the *end* to be pursued. This is precisely what is *not* given to us."

[14] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 35. "Does the end 'justify' the means or not? The teacher can present you with the need to make this choice, but he can do no more without ceasing to be a teacher and becoming instead a demagogue."

> prophetless time, their 'intellectual sacrifice' guiltily refuses to affirm the cold reality that mature personalities embrace.[15]

And here we can see again one of the major differences between Nietzsche and Weber – Nietzsche's critical take on the state of the world bears a spark of hope for overcoming. Weber's take is such that one must brace themselves against the reality that hope is a lost cause, the iron cage has set in, and only through the seeking of a vocation does one find even the hollowest sense of meaning (albeit not *meaning* in the sense of the ends which the polytheism of values pits against each other). Indeed, Weber goes on to state that "life, left to itself and understood only in terms of itself, is nothing but an eternal struggle among these gods,"[16] and so deciding rationally between these values, these ends, *these gods,* is something which must simply be abandoned as a possibility. Coming back to Nietzsche's focus on the will, Weber states that the "various possible attitudes of life are in unresolvable conflict, irreconcilable, so in the end we all must *make a choice*."[17] Indeed, "the question of whether scholarship is worthwhile—both whether an individual is 'called' to pursue it and whether it is an objectively worthy 'calling' at all—is yet another value judgment that cannot be proclaimed in the lecture hall."[18]

While Weber as an individual may have held various moral positions relating to this or that,[19] as an academic he was making a clear claim that even the 'hope' of Nietzsche – the overcoming which could be connected with his understanding of charisma, and charismatic figures in history – was doomed:

> [If one were to ask] the question of 'Which of the warring gods should I serve? Or maybe there is a completely different god, and who is that?'—then the answer might be: Only a prophet, or savior. If there is not such figure, or if his message is no longer believed, then you won't in any case make him appear on earth by having thousands of professors, petty prophets living off state salaries and benefits, try to take up the mantle of one in the lecture hall. All you will do is make fully clear the decisive fact that this prophet, so longed for by so many in the younger generation, *does not exist* and will never come in the full force of his meaning. … our destiny is to live in an age without prophets, far from God.[20]

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[15] Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow,* 16.
[16] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 36.
[17] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 36, emphasis original.
[18] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 36.
[19] Reitter and Wellmon, "Introduction," viii-xiv, xviii-xx.
[20] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 37, emphasis in original.

Weber notes that while one can always retreat into the 'arms of the Church,' and sacrifice your intellect in doing so,[21] that it is better to meet the demands of the day with a stiff upper lip and a focused mind aimed at the specialized areas of knowledge of one's vocation, than by willfully overcoming those 'average men' who surround you.[22] Indeed, finding one's place in a vocation often include submission to a certain degree to men who you might consider lesser than you in some respect – something Weber notes in relation to the scholastic realm,[23] and something which interestingly diverges from MacIntyre's account of deference to proper authority,[24] as Weber splits authority, creating a space for *improper* authority *epistemologically speaking*, while it remaining proper authority *institutionally speaking*. This nuance in authority present in Weber represents a useful potential tool for MacIntyre to avoid the conservative readings which are all-too-common of him, and will be discussed briefly in §6.2.(a).

While there are similarities between scholarship and politics as 'vocations,' there are also important differences which Weber points out. Taking what is today a common definition – that the state is the "*only* human community that (successfully) claims a *monopoly on legitimate physical violence* for itself within a certain geographical territory… All other groups and individuals are granted the right to use physical violence only insofar as the *state* allows it—this is what characterizes our current system"[25] – Weber pursues an understanding of politics as a space necessarily *distinct* from ethics,[26] although not necessarily *entirely divorced* from it.[27]

When laying out the concept of the 'professional politician,' Weber notes the distinction between living 'for' and living 'from' politics,[28] where the former is someone who organizes their life around politics and the political causes they take up. This can be for a host of reasons, whether they be love of power, increasing one's own self-esteem, or to give one's life 'meaning;' regardless of reason, someone living 'for' politics "makes it his life's work, *psychologically* speaking."[29] Someone who lives 'from' politics represents those who make their *economic* living from politics,

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[21] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 41.
[22] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 42.
[23] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 4-11.
[24] Wain, "MacIntyre: Teaching, Politics and Practice," 232.
[25] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 46, emphasis original.
[26] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 99-113.
[27] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 114.
[28] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 55.
[29] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 55, emphasis original.

and although these two manners of living are not mutually exclusive, they are importantly distinct.[30] This becomes especially clear when Weber addresses the opposed maxims of 'ethics of personal conviction' and 'ethics of responsibility' which often simultaneously struggle for control of the political scene.[31] The *ethics of personal conviction* are exactly that: ethics held to one's heart as justifiable without question of actionability *or* consequence. One motivated by such an ethic "feels that if you act from true conviction, you are not responsible for any bad outcomes: it's the world's fault, or the fault of other people's stupidity, or of the God who created humanity this way."[32] While Weber notes that "an ethical system based on personal conviction is [not necessarily] irresponsible, [n]or [are] people who feel responsible for the consequences of their actions lack[ing] convictions,"[33] there remains a "deep chasm between acting according to normative demands … [and] acting in a way that takes account of, and takes responsibility for, the (foreseeable) *consequences* of one's actions."[34] What Weber is drawing attention to in his distinction is the phenomena where ethics of personal conviction lead to positions where one feels if they are acting from 'true conviction' that you *are absolved of any consequence, so long as you acted according to your conviction*.[35]

On the other hand, an *ethics of responsibility* recognizes the "average human failings" of the world:[36]

> Someone with an ethics of responsibility feels no right to foist the (predictable) consequences of his own actions onto others—he will say that these consequences are part and parcel of the actions themselves. Whereas under an ethics of personal conviction, one feels 'responsible' for nothing but preserving the flame of pure conviction.[37]

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[30] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 55.
[31] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 103-15.
[32] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104.
[33] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104. An example of such might be a Kantian ethics of conviction seen in the categorical imperative, or a Christian (or another religious person) motivated by some version of the Golden Rule. Although any such conviction is one of responsibility to others, and hence political *at least as much* as it is philosophical/theological, and so is in keeping with Weber's claim that "only in conjunction do they define the true human being who is *capable* of doing the true 'work of politics.'" (114).
[34] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104, emphasis original.
[35] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104. It is worth noting that the primary targets of Weber's account of an ethics of personal conviction were Christian pacifists and utopian Marxists during the First World War.
[36] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104.
[37] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 104.

Ethics of responsibility thus "have no right to presuppose human goodness and perfection" and so are inherently *consequentialist* – at least insofar as consequences are predictable – and ethics of personal conviction are (often) *non-consequentialist*. While an argument could be made that ethics of personal conviction are consequentialist in certain circumstances or forms, *the primary motivating factors* for the ethics of responsibility are consequentialist, and non-consequentialist for the ethics of personal conviction.

This question of ethics is further problematized when Weber draws it back into line with his initial definition of politics as the legitimate practice of violence, as those adhering to an ethics of personal conviction are often those who claim fully pacifist positions because the only "logical possibility for such an ethical system [is that] *every* action using morally questionable means must be *rejected*."[38] This would seem to divide politics and ethics of personal conviction entirely – however he notes that the structure of politics tends to overwhelm the ethics of personal conviction when and where the two meet: "Those who have just been preaching 'love over violence,' for instance, are a moment later calling for violence…but this is the *last* violence that will ever be needed; it will bring about a golden age in which all violence has been eliminated."[39]

Weber notes that this recurring theme of '*just one more*' violence is not a modern phenomenon, but rather something which has been ethically engaged with by every religion throughout time. What creates the moral problems of politics is "the *legitimate use of violence* by some groups of people against others."[40] The saving of one's soul, or the souls of others, cannot be done through politics because of this.[41] Despite all of this, one cannot *simply* turn to the consequentialist 'ethics of responsibility,' as alone the striving for power,[42] and rewards – whether *material* or *spiritual* – is insufficient for those who seek to fill a 'political vocation.'[43] There must instead be *both* an ethics of conviction *and* responsibility: the personal conviction must have an "inner gravity"[44] which doesn't result either in the *inability* to struggle in the political realm, or

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[38] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 106, emphasis original.
[39] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 106, emphasis original.
[40] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 109, emphasis original.
[41] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 111.
[42] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 95.
[43] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 110.
[44] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 113.

merely the creation of psychologically hollowed out, mechanized[45] "windbags … just getting drunk on sensationalized Romanticism"[46] who, once they come to power, "tend to degenerate into ordinary fortune hunters exceptionally easily."[47] Only in conjunction do the ethics of personal conviction and responsibility "define the true human being who is capable of doing the true 'work of politics.'"[48] This conjunction is necessary for those whose politics truly seeks to be 'vocational.'

Once again, however, we see the common theme in Weber, one of a steeled hopelessness requiring a stiff upper lip to continue:

> We face not the flowers of summer but, at least initially, a polar night of harsh and icy darkness … And when this night slowly recedes, who among those whose spring now seems so lush will still be alive? What will have become of them on the inside? Will they be embittered, or will they have … settl[ed] for a flat dull acceptance of the world and their job in it, or … will they have adopted a mystical escapism, both those with a genuine gift for such an approach and those who often, damagingly, force themselves into it for fashion's sake? In every one of these cases, I will conclude that these people were *not* up to facing their own actions, *nor* to facing the world as it really is and their everyday life in it. Objectively, they did not in fact have the vocation for politics.[49]

Political *vocation* requires, for Weber, a certain type of character, a capacity for judgment,[50] which allows one to sustain oneself through the uncertainties of the violent political realm and to balance oneself between the ethics of personal conviction and of responsibility.

Interestingly, politics as a vocation requires certain *virtues*,[51] and the recognition – and avoidance – of certain vices.[52] Indeed, the distinction Weber makes between what might generally be considered 'personal ethics' and '*realpolitik*,' and how they need not be completely divorced from one another, parallels many of MacIntyre's concerns regarding political questions. Weber in fact may represent a critique of MacIntyre – as someone who is not elaborating *enough* on the

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[45] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 93, 111.
[46] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 113.
[47] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 111.
[48] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 114.
[49] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 114-15, emphasis original.
[50] *Internal* to one's vocation.
[51] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 95-96. Weber lists *passion*, a *sense of responsibility*, and *clarity of vision* as virtues which allow for the functional fulfillment of politics as a vocation.
[52] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 97. Specifically *vanity*.

political and how it interconnects with questions of ethics. This will be expanded on in coming sections, but it is important to highlight the point Weber ended his discussion of politics on:

> Politics is a slow and difficult drilling of holes into hard boards, done with both passion and clear-sightedness. To achieve what is possible in the world, one must constantly reach for the impossible … remain[ing] steadfast of heart, undaunted by the failure of all their hopes—otherwise, they will be unable to achieve even what *is* possible today. Only those who are certain they won't be shattered when the world turns out to be too ignorant or evil for what they are trying to give it—those who can say, even when faced with all that, 'And yet!'—only they are truly called to do the work of politics.[53]

While the political realm seems fuller of consequence and chaos than the scholastic world,[54] Weber notes the possibility of a type of person who can maneuver such a realm. This *concern*, *description*, and *guarded hope* parallels in many way's MacIntyre's:

> What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament.[55]

While Weber inherits a more Nietzschean influenced individualism in his understanding of leadership, charisma, and politics as a vocation, and MacIntyre takes a more collectivist approach – indeed one which Weber might critique as overly defined by an 'ethics of personal conviction' – a bridge exists here between the projects of each.[56]

With a (brief) idea of some of Weber's contributions to the foundation of sociology – through his development of interpretive methodologies, theoretical tools for understanding the social world, and pedagogical theories embedded in his work still of value to this day – we can

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[53] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 115, emphasis original.
[54] Weber, "The Politician's Work," 97. Weber notes an important difference here, which also implies different required virtues between vocations: "In academic circles, [vanity] is something of an occupational hazard. But the scholar's vanity, while perhaps particularly unpleasant to listen to, is also relatively harmless, in the sense that it doesn't generally disrupt the scholarship itself. With politicians it is very different. To do his job, a politician needs a desire for power; this 'lust for power,' … is precisely how he acts as politician, and is this one of the politician's normal attributes. The sing against he holy spirit of his calling begins when the politician's lust for power is no longer grounded in objective reality and instead simply intoxicates the politician personally."
[55] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 263.
[56] A bridge picked up on by others as well. See Breen, "The New Dark Age: MacIntyre on Bureaucratic Individualism and the Hope for an Ethical Polity," in *Under Weber's Shadow*, 153-74.

now turn to looking more broadly at the influence Weber has had on MacIntyre, and what MacIntyre might offer Weberian sociology. The seemingly stoic position which Weber puts forth, despite its many differences with MacIntyre, has many similarities of note. Likewise, much can be drawn from MacIntyre to describe, critique, or bolster many of Weber's description of disparate values and the non-rational assertions of will required to choose between them,[57] the impact bureaucracy has on the modern self,[58] the tendency of power to become bureaucratic in a rationalized world,[59] the role of will in 'choosing' a moral position,[60] the 'necessity' of specialization in various 'scholarly' traditions of knowledge, the role of the academic in the university,[61] the nihilistic relation to conceptions of 'Truth' or 'meaning,'[62] etc. To reign in what could be an endless series of rabbit-holes, we will instead be focusing on elaborating on how *practices* and *crafts* relate to *vocations*, and the shared *pedagogical concerns* within MacIntyre and Weber, and how they point towards questions of *human flourishing*.

6.2. Parallel Themes between Weber and MacIntyre

By Weber's account, capitalism and modernity have trapped individuals in a rationalized prison, where the human potential for overcoming these issues has itself *added* to their entrapment. From this point we see various diverging developments in sociological theory, including the rise of postmodernism which grows from the question marks left in Weber's descriptions of the social world and how individuals relate to rationality and morality. Despite this, MacIntyre brings some interesting tools to the table regarding Weber, some critical, and others pointing towards dialogical progress.

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[57] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 26.
[58] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 30.
[59] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 109. "[I]n our culture we know of no organized movement towards power which is not bureaucratic and managerial in mode and we know of no justifications for authority which are not Weberian in form. And if this is true of Marxism when it is on the road to power, how much more so is it the case when it arrives. All power tends to coopt and absolute power coopts absolutely."
[60] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 114. "Nietzsche resolves, let will replace reason and let us make ourselves into autonomous moral subjects by some gigantic and heroic act of will, and act of the will that by its quality may remind us of that archaic aristocratic self-assertiveness which preceded what Nietzsche took to be the disaster of slave-morality and which by its effectiveness may be the prophetic precursor of a new era. … I have also noticed that Nietzsche's central thesis was presupposed by Weber's central categories of thought. Hence Nietzsche's prophetic irrationalism … remains immanent in the Weberian managerial forms of our culture. Whenever those immersed in the bureaucratic culture of the age try to think their way through to the moral foundations of what they are and what they do, they will discover suppressed Nietzschean premises."
[61] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 216-36.
[62] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 196-215.

One of the things which MacIntyre spends much of his career engaging with is precisely the problem surrendered to by Weber: the irreducibility of values and their disconnection from scholarly pursuits.[63] MacIntyre challenges both these positions, critiquing some of Weber's influences, as well as Weber himself.[64] While he notes that Weber's descriptions of the bureaucratic, rationalized world are largely accurate insofar as the modern world tends towards this form of structuration,[65] MacIntyre is critical of the inaccessibility of values.

Weber placed values and knowledge in two spaces, divided by a seemingly impassable void, resulting in what Freund exemplified by "the individualist undecided between two types of activity: the Promethean and the Epimethean."[66] MacIntyre, on the other hand, presents a case with an eye to Weber's recognition of the socially and historically specific differences between value-positions (and knowledge-positions), which *need not* result in such an individualistic cage. In developing his idea of 'traditions of inquiry,' MacIntyre recognized the historicity of various epistemic and ethical positions, *without* falling into the traps of incommensurability, untranslatability, and atomized individualism. While MacIntyre doesn't provide a singular conception of 'tradition,'[67] he does provide over the range of his intellectual career an understanding that a tradition of inquiry can represent a range of historical and social structures and institutions, both external to individuals and carried and reproduced within them,[68] aimed at shared ethical and epistemic questions.[69] Traditions are thus both "referential, at least in the broad

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[63] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 26. "Questions of ends are questions of values, an on values reason is silent; conflict between rival values cannot be rationally settled. Instead one must simply choose—between parties, classes, nations, causes, ideals."

[64] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 114. MacIntyre notes the Nietzschean influence in Weber's work, and many of his critiques of Nietzsche carry over to elements of Weber.

[65] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 86. "Weber's account of bureaucracy notoriously has many flaws. But in his insistence that the rationality of adjusting means to ends in the most economical and efficient way is the central task of the bureaucrat and that therefore the appropriate mode of justification of his activity by the bureaucrat lies in the appeal to his (or later her) ability to deploy a body of scientific and above all social scientific knowledge, organized in terms of and understood as comprising a set of universal law-like generalizations, Weber provides a key to much of the modern age."

[66] Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, 24.

[67] Reiss Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas: A Proposed 'Traditions of Inquiry'-Theoretic Turn in Sociological Theory," Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Calgary, (2018), 74.

[68] In a manner not dissimilar to Bourdieu's conception of *habitus*. In what MacIntyre came to call 'prereflective backgrounds.' See Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 53-55.

[69] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 349. While the historic and social level of focus has changed throughout his work, MacIntyre is clear from the beginning that traditions of inquiry are both epistemic and moral phenomena. Comparing several different historical traditions of inquiry he puts it well when he states that "In each of them intellectual enquiry was or is part of the elaboration of a mode of social and moral life of which the intellectual enquiry itself was an integral part, and

sense, [as] it has a subject matter, it is 'about' something that it mediates to the intellects of those participating in it,"[70] and so is an epistemic, linguistic and cultural concept,[71] and it is "constituted by debates over the good"[72] and so is also a concept of moral community. Traditions represent both historically situated phenomena, but also elements of people's 'prereflective backgrounds,'[73] helping MacIntyre analyze how values can be subjects of knowledge, and how knowledge can be impacted by values, without surrendering to absolute relativism.[74] In fact, MacIntyre provides a description of the average person in the modern day which represents a potential critique of Weber's hopelessness:

> Most of our contemporaries [cannot recognize] … traditions that they have already implicitly to some significant degree given their allegiance to. … Instead they tend to live betwixt and between, accepting usually unquestioningly the assumptions of the dominant liberal individualist forms of public life, but drawing in different areas of their lives upon a variety of tradition-generated resources of thought and action, transmitted from a variety of familial, religious, educational, and other social and cultural sources. This type of self which has too many half-convictions and too few settled coherent convictions, too many partly formulated alternatives and too few opportunities to evaluate them systematically, brings to its encounters with the claims of rival traditions a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness except on the rarest of occasions.[75]

This represents one potential 'starting point' for those who explicitly may take themselves to exist 'outside tradition.' This is a critique which John Haldane holds of MacIntyre: that one existing 'outside tradition' must either make a choice rooted in reason or be non-rational, but that "the former is excluded if rational norms are only available to a participant within a coherent tradition … return[ing] us to the thought that all choosing is from within a tradition, but if so there is nothing

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in each of them the forms of that life were embodied with greater or lesser degrees of imperfection in social and political institutions which also draw their life from other sources." See also Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," in *Alasdair MacIntyre,* (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50-51.

[70] Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 50.

[71] Despite his focus on the epistemic and moral foci of many of MacIntyre's examples – especially the Aristotelean-Thomist tradition – he also notes that such 'traditions of enquiry' include historical and social elements which help make up the totality of a tradition. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 349.

[72] Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 50.

[73] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 111; Terry Pinkard, "MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity," in *Alasdair MacIntyre,* (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192-94; Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 53-55.

[74] Jean Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 45-49.

[75] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 397.

that is to be said by or to such a person, and *a fortiori* he cannot make a rational choice."[76] Such a critique – that one either cannot be rational outside of tradition and so those who sit outside of a tradition stand on one side of a gap of incommensurability and incommunicability without the capacity to 'choose' – is one anticipated by MacIntyre, who notes in part (as above) that many may sit at the intersection of several implicit traditions which one is a part of – or which one is at least aware enough of to 'speak some of the language,' and so to not exist in a completely non-rational location. In addition to this, MacIntyre notes that despite the often irrational and particular starting point of many traditions,[77] traditions themselves have the capacity to become *more* rational insofar as they function as traditions over time,[78] and so despite the possibility of an ideal-typical 'first member' who starts up a tradition at some point in history, this 'primordial outsider' does not actually represent the key to an accusation of relativism which some – such as Haldane – view them to be. Such accusations which have been levied at MacIntyre in the past merely pick up on the sociological undercurrents in his work, evidenced variously throughout his career in relation to many areas of research:

> Since beliefs are expressed in and through rituals and ritual dramas, masks and modes of dress, the ways in which houses are structured and villages and towns laid out, and of course by actions in general, the reformulations of belief are not to be thought of only in intellectual terms; or rather the intellect is not to be thought of as either a Cartesian mind or a materialist brain, but as that through which thinking individuals relate themselves to each other and to natural and social objects as these present themselves to them.[79]

Indeed, we can see once more the similarities here with Weber, particularly his position between a fully-idealist and fully-materialist position.[80]

6.2.(a) Practices, Crafts, and Vocations

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[76] Haldane, as cited by Gordan Graham, "MacIntyre on History and Philosophy," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.
[77] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354, emphasis added. "The rationality of a tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive enquiry is in key and essential part a matter o the kind of progress which it makes through a number of well-defined types of stages. *Every such form of enquiry begins in and from some condition of pure historical contingency, from the beliefs, institutions, and practices of some particular community which constitute a given*."
[78] Graham, "MacIntyre on History and Philosophy," 34; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354.
[79] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 355.
[80] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 122.

Both embedded within his concept of 'traditions,' and elaborated separately, MacIntyre presents a pair of concepts which seem to be developed in relation to Weber's account of '*vocations'* or '*callings*.' These are MacIntyre's concepts of '*practices*,' and '*crafts*.' Weber first describes the idea of a 'calling' in the *Protestant Ethic* when indentifying the quasi-religiously influenced choice to adhere oneself to a particular job or purpose, embedding a normative significance to the work done.[81] Such an attitude sees "work as an end in itself, as a '*calling*.'"[82] Weber initially uses the concept to track a difference between the Medieval divine 'calling' of one to a task, wherein the fulfillment of that task was seen as a divine service, wherein success in the given task could be seen as signs of divine Providence, of one's membership in the Elect, to the eventual result of the decaying of these religious beliefs, to the lifting of "what was, at best, a behavior which was morally no more than tolerated," usury, becoming a 'calling' as understood by Benjamin Franklin.[83] He went on to describe how such a shift, such a hollowing out of the concept of its divine basis, resulted in 'empty callings:'

> The idea of the 'duty in a calling' haunts our lives like the ghost of once-held religious beliefs. Where 'doing one's job' cannot be directly linked to the highest spiritual and cultural values—although it may be felt to be more than mere economic coercion—the individual today usually makes no attempt to find any meaning in it.[84]

We can see the impact of this conception of a 'calling' or 'vocation' carried forward in his 'vocation lectures' on academia and politics. Weber responds to the emptiness of the shells of the vocations of the past by proposing a 'stiff upper lip' in one's choice to submit to a particular vocation in an age where any ultimate values have retreated into the private realm of individual choice.[85]

For Weber, a vocation in the contemporary age is something which must be self-sufficient insofar as it represents an end-in-itself, *at least by its own standards.*[86] This internalization of standards, and presuppositions, makes each vocation – be it a science, jurisprudence, aesthetics, etc. – self-sufficient. All, however, by Weber's standards, fall prey to the inaccessibility of the first

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[81] Baehr and Wells, "Introduction," in *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, xviii.
[82] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 18, emphasis in original.
[83] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 25.
[84] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, 121.
[85] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 41-42.
[86] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 24-26.

principles and final ends which make up the vocation's foundations and goals. There is some similarity here with MacIntyre, but again we see that MacIntyre offers more hopeful, less isolated concepts, especially *practices*, which as a reminder MacIntyre defines 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.[87]

The goods which MacIntyre claims are internal to practices are *appreciated for their own sake rather than as a means to an end.* MacIntyre uses the example of teaching a child to play chess and appreciate chess-the-game, rather than just chess-the-means-to-candy-should-I-win to distinguish between the goods internal to, and external to, a given practice.[88] This parallels Weber's account of vocations, where the vocation is seen as having both internal and external goods: for example, succeeding at science is seen as an achievement of value regardless of whether it comes with money or prestige attached to it.

Also important to MacIntyre's concept of practices is the fact that those who "lack the relevant experience are incompetent thereby as judges of internal goods" for *x* or *y* practice.[89] This is because there are internal standards of excellence to each practice, and we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best of those standards which have been realized so far.[90] Again, a parallel with Weber who sees a 'barrier of judgment' between what academic vocations presuppose, especially that "the result of any piece of that discipline is *important*, in the sense of 'worth knowing,'" and the external judgment which must take place regarding the external value of such items of academic importance, where we must "accept or reject this ultimate meaning according to our own view of life."[91] The external goods of a vocation can be judged by any, but the internal goods can only be accurately judged by those embedded within the vocation. Weber's example of a doctor's work to keep someone alive and minimize their suffering is a good example here: the question of 'is life worth living' is external – Weber

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[87] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.
[88] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188-89.
[89] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 189.
[90] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.
[91] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 24, emphasis original.

claims – to the vocation of being a doctor, and so one is not better suited to answer the question as a doctor than as an average person on the street.[92] Inversely, one who is not a doctor cannot judge the internal goods of the vocation, for instance the skills which might make one more efficient.

An example may help elaborate this. Two patients have the exact same medical issue, enter different hospitals at the same time, and end up having their medical issues resolved. Patient x_1 enters emergency room y_1, and patient x_2 enters emergency room y_2. Patient x_1 waits 30 minutes before seeing a doctor, and then spends two hours in surgery. They judge that this hospital, this emergency room, and this doctor – in some manner – are *efficient*. Patient x_2 waits 8 hours to see a doctor and spends 9 hours in surgery. Patient x_2 can, after a long period of frustration, and despite the end result being a resolution of their medical issue, judge the hospital, emergency room, and doctor – in some manner – as *inefficient*. While it is relatively easy for patients x_1 and x_2 to judge the efficiency or lack thereof of their medical experience, they are far less well-positioned for identifying *how* or *why* this is the case. As persons external to the vocation in question, they do not have the range of knowledge necessary to be able to identify how the connection doctor z_1 may have to the goods internal to their vocation, versus the connection doctor z_2 might have. For instance, such questions as 'do you put someone under full or partial anesthetic,' or 'do you request assistance during surgery, and when,' or 'where and when do you make an incision, and how deep,' etc., are all questions which can only be properly answered by those internal to the vocation despite the fact that they all contribute to the external good of efficiency. So, goods external to a vocation (in the case of this example: efficiency) can be appreciated by any, *what* and *how* internal goods *count towards* such external goods, and *how they are to be judged*, are *standards internal to the vocation* and so can only be effectively judged by those internal to a given vocation.[93]

While Weber's account of vocations seems to present the skills which make up the vocation *as* 'the goods internal to the vocation,' MacIntyre makes a distinction between 'goods,' 'virtues,' and 'technical skills,' in his account of *practices*. *Virtues* are excellences which MacIntyre partially

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[92] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 25.

[93] This is not to be confused with the Dunning-Kruger effect, where individuals with limited competence in a given domain tend to overestimate their abilities. In both MacIntyre's account of practices, and Weber's account of vocations, we get an understanding of how internal and external goods which relate to a given practice/vocation allow for points of reference to make sense of how effective a judge one might be toward those goods – something an individual specifically is failing to do under the Dunning-Kruger effect.

defines as "acquired human qualit[ies] the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices,"[94] which helps distinguish them from technical skills[95] and from institutions.[96] *Technical skills*, according to MacIntyre, do not in themselves account for the ends which they serve, whereas practices – which often *make use* of technical skills – participate in the *setting of goals* within that practice.[97] Practices are thus internally capable of setting their own ends, thereby directing the technical skills which may make up aspects of the practice.[98] *Institutions* are "characteristically and necessarily concerned with … external goods," and in so being, cannot be interchangeably used in place of the idea of practice which MacIntyre is developing.[99] While practices often rely on institutions for survival, the "creativity of the practice are always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness of the institution."[100] So we can see that practices sit between technical skills and institutions: technical skills are capable of having goods internal to them, and external goods towards which they can be directed, but are incapable of directing the bearer towards those external goods; institutions on the other hand are typically the means by which skills are directed towards (value-relevant) ends, which the institution has chosen. The institution itself might, however, be said to be a further degree divorced from any particular technical skill than a practice is. Picking up on our above example, we could argue that something impacting the wait-time and surgery-times for patients x_1 and x_2 is sourced from *within the institutions* of hospitals y_1 and y_2. One might easily say that this extra variable in the form of institutions actually makes people *outside* the practice (patients x_1 and x_2) better situated to make judgments on the efficiency of their experience, but given that there is an often nuanced and confusing relationship between practices and institutions, those embedded in the practices in question (doctors z_1 and z_2) are better able to distinguish between the means and goods internal and external to their practice, and the influence the institution has *on* said practice, and so are *still* better positioned to judge the question of efficiency.

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[94] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191.
[95] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193.
[96] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.
[97] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193-94.
[98] Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 40.
[99] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.
[100] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.

Here we can also see a possible divergence from Weber, for Weber does not explicitly differentiate vocations, the technical skills which make up vocations, and institutions which sometimes make up aspects of a vocation, which sometimes vocations are embedded within. An excellent example would be that of a particular academic discipline, say, sociology. It contains a range of technical skills (relating to methods, theory, navigating bureaucracy, applying for funding, teaching, etc.) and it is simultaneously embedded within institutions (the university, various levels of government in terms of funding, etc.) and contributes to making up various institutions (the C.S.A, teaching associations, etc.). As a *practice*, sociology would be distinguished holistically as something above and beyond its technical elements, and from the institutions which it is related to. The same could be said of, say, chemistry as a practice, however given its more unified methodology, and agreed upon set of external goods, it resembles a more coherent practice than does sociology.[101] This makes sense, however, given the longer history which chemistry has had to develop into such a practice. Weber's *vocations* do not elaborate such distinctions as clearly as MacIntyre.

While MacIntyre seems to provide a more nuanced account through his distinguishment of goods, virtues, technical skills, and institutions, returning to the point raise above, we can see that Weber seems to present a more nuanced account of authority within a given practice/vocation.[102] Splitting authority between epistemological propriety and institutional propriety, Weber provides a distinction which allows us to more clearly present critiques of institutional authority. One need only think of the archetype of the senior administrator who has been in the job for thirty-plus years, through a combination of nepotism and no one else wanting to put the effort in to supplant them, to recognize the object of such a Weberian critique. MacIntyre can be (conservatively) read as demanding deference to authority, but it is important to remember that he only asks deference to *proper* authority,[103] which I would argue is a type of authority where – using Weberian terms – the epistemological and institutional authority align. So, while this distinction may initially seem as a potential space for Weberian critique of MacIntyre, dialogically I see it rather as a Weberian tool for helping MacIntyre achieve his aim. Indeed, both Weber and MacIntyre recognize that stepping

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[101] Although this is not entirely a bad thing, as noted by Dorothy Emmet and Alasdair MacIntyre, "Introduction," in *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis*, (Glasgow, UK: Robert Maclehose and Co., Ltd., 1972), xi.
[102] See §6.1.
[103] Wain, "MacIntyre: Teaching, Politics and Practice," 232.

into a new vocation/practice will likely involve some form of submission to individuals who might play host to a range of vices we despise, but we do so anyways because of the virtues they hold in relation to the vocation/practice in question we aim to learn. Returning to MacIntyre's example of learning how to play chess, one could easily dislike spending time with your sexist grandfather, but he is a damn good chess player, and so one chooses to associate with them only in relation to the practice, but not beyond it. The opposite could of course be true: one could first some to individuals based on their epistemological authority in a given practice and find that you enjoy their company for adjacent or additional reasons.

Moving to the idea of a 'craft,' as laid out in Chapter 2, §2.2, there is a similarity to MacIntyre's conception of technical skills, but crafts seem to have more control over the setting of ends and definitions of goods internal to that craft. Seemingly unlike technical skills, crafts seem to be specifically linked to traditions, which provide the historical, social, epistemological, and ethical context for the craft to determine its overall aims and ends, and the craft in turn produces skills which help reproduce and advance the tradition and the questions it aims towards. It would appear then that practices are *more concerned with internal goods* whereas crafts are *more concerned with external goods (the goods of the tradition).* This is clear as practices are capable of setting their own ends based on internal standards of goods and virtues, and producing the skills necessary to sufficiently do so, whereas crafts are only capable of taking up the ends of an extant tradition to further that tradition. We can see in concepts like these some of the theoretical foundations which support critiques MacIntyre has of Weber's generally individualist position. While Weber might claim practices are similar to vocations insofar as the goods are internal to them – MacIntyre would retort that practices exist in historical (and traditional) contexts which connect them to other practices which make up human life. In addition, the virtues which are internal to a given practice (say, *patience* in the case of the practice of medicine) are general enough to be applicable in some manner across practices (patience is relevant to *many* practices). While goods may be internal to practices, the virtues which make those goods attainable rest *across* practices – a space which is non-rational and divorces *this* vocation from *that* vocation for Weber.

6.2.(b) Pedagogy and Human Flourishing

A final interesting area of comparison related to questions of vocations, practices, and crafts are the pedagogical questions embedded in both Weber's and MacIntyre's accounts. Weber makes a

clear case that a teacher is someone who must try to impart *capacities to learn* to their students, specific to the subject matter of the teacher's expertise, without using the podium to make oneself a demagogue.[104] MacIntyre, however, notes that "any learner within a craft-tradition"[105] faces a predicament, requiring two things:

> a teacher and an obedient trust that what the teacher, interpreting the text [of that tradition], declares to be good reasons for transforming oneself into a different kind of person – and thus a different kind of reader – will turn out to be genuinely good reasons in the light afforded by that understanding of the texts which becomes available only to the transformed self. The intending reader has to have inculcated into him or herself certain attitudes and dispositions, certain virtues, *before* he or she can know why these are to be accounted virtues. So a prerational reordering of the self has to occur before the reader can have an adequate standard by which to judge what is a good reason and what is not. And this reordering requires obedient trust, not only in the authority of this particular teacher, but in that of the whole tradition of interpretive commentary into which that teacher had had earlier him or herself to be initiated through [their own] reordering and conversion.[106]

Taking 'text' as meaning both the literal texts which make up the body of knowledge of any tradition, as well as the idioms which can be 'read' and make up the morals and mores intertwining a tradition of inquiry, we can see that MacIntyre's pedagogical starting point is not that dissimilar from Weber's. We can also see that much like the prerational starting point of any tradition of inquiry we have a prerational starting point for any *person* – and like the process of rationalization which can occur through a functioning tradition, there is a process of rationalization which can occur through an individual. This process of rationalization, however, is different from the rationalization process Weber describes, insofar as it includes considerations of social, historical, moral, as well as epistemic considerations – and capacities to engage with questions in all of these areas. Capacities, MacIntyre argues, which must always be *developed* in both formal *and* informal learning situations. The virtues which make up a given practice or tradition are in many ways *processes*: the recognition of them *as virtues* is a learning process which takes time, and once this recognition is achieved, the *living out* of the virtues is a continuous aspect of living one's life, of *being*.[107]

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[104] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 32-36.
[105] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 82.
[106] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 82-83, emphasis in original.
[107] See Chapter 2, §2.4.(a).

In relation to learning (whether choosing a tradition to adhere to, or a specific person to learn from) one, *initially*, must simply 'make a choice;'[108] they cannot be taught *how to choose* if they *don't make the choice to be taught how to choose* in the first place, and this would require a leader or guide – something Weber claims teachers ought not to be.[109] It is here we see a pedagogic dissonance start to develop between Weber and MacIntyre, as the latter has an account of the process of inculcation of attitudes and dispositions which can impact that 'simple choice' in the form of his 'prereflective background(s),'[110] and sees it as necessary as a starting point for learning. While both agree one must 'make a choice' to adhere to what one's teacher is teaching, Weber sees this as an unfortunately necessary consequence of the disconnect between facts and values and MacIntyre sees this as a necessary element to any learning process within a functioning tradition of inquiry. The gap widens when Weber claims that teachers must *not* be guides or leaders, while MacIntyre claims that – to a certain extent – that is *precisely what they must be* to help inculcate the necessary skills to be able to learn.

Weber is in essence waving off understanding *why* and *how* students come to teachers in the first place, and why and how they make the choice to sit in this classroom, learning this subject, with or without gusto, for some reason, merely operating on assumption the "[b]eing a teacher simply *presupposes* that teaching is something worth doing."[111] MacIntyre on the other hand gives us the tools to understand how the role of teacher and the role of guide overlap - arguably a more useful theorization of pedagogical questions as it applies not just within an academic space, but within the larger social world of learning. We listen to the lessons our parents teach us because they are our parents, not because they are 'teachers.' We hang on to the lessons taught by community members we respect because they are seen as role-models, not because they are teachers. Indeed, we sit in our first classes in university and take notes because we see our professors as *figures worth listening to* before we see them as teachers of a particular subject, and before we can judge the quality of their teaching by any standards internal to the subject being taught. Here we see another difference between Weber's and MacIntyre's accounts of pedagogy.

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[108] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 36, emphasis original. "The various possible attitudes of life are in unresolvable conflict, irreconcilable, so in the end we all must *make a choice*."
[109] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 32.
[110] Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 53-55.
[111] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 36, emphasis original.

While Weber presents academia and the teaching that takes place within it as an institution, and an 'island of normativity,' MacIntyre does *not* represent teaching as a practice in and of itself. MacIntyre argues in fact that teaching is "never more than a means" which "does not have its own goods," and therefore 'teacher' is not a specific 'kind of life.'[112] Indeed, "teachers are involved in a variety of practices" and so "teaching is an ingredient of every practice," rather than representing a practice *by itself*.[113] All teaching is "for the sake of something else," for MacIntyre, and so "[t]he life of a teacher of mathematics, whose goods are the goods of mathematics, is one thing; a life of a teacher of music whose goods are the goods of music is another."[114] For MacIntyre,

> Teaching is not, within this model, a separate game played in its own right to serve its own internal purposes, as would be the case in a practice, properly so called. Quite the contrary, teaching is subservient in its purposes and in everything else to the game it serves, to the practice it serves, and its whole point is to help learners discover themselves within that practice.[115]

Teaching and learning are thus not *practices*, but *means,* "since the good is not intrinsic to itself but is that of the learner and the community." Indeed, teaching would "appear to qualify as an institution" by MacIntyre's account, given that the education system is oft corrupted by bureaucracy and self-serving and self-regarding careerists.[116] Teaching and learning represent not practices or careers for MacIntyre, but make up part of what it means to be a *flourishing human being*,[117] across all kinds of practices, and it is from here we can turn to his idea of *human flourishing*.

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[112] Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre in Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," *The Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain*, 36, no.1, (2002): 9. See also Kenneth Wain, "MacIntyre: Teaching, Politics and Practices," *The Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain*, 37, no. 2, (2003): 228, 230-31; Kenneth Wain, "MacIntyre's Educated Public," In *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World: The Education Crisis,* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004): 91-134.
[113] MacIntyre and Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre in Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," 8.
[114] MacIntyre and Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre in Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," 9.
[115] Wain, "MacIntyre: Teaching, Politics and Practices," 231.
[116] Wain, "MacIntyre," 231.
[117] James B. Wise, "A Conceptualization of Recreation that Contributes to Human Flourishing," *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 53, no. 1 (2019), 39. "Though counterintuitive, people become independent and fully human because of their dependency upon other people. People are born into the world as physically helpless beings with undeveloped reasoning abilities. They depend upon other people to learn how to reason and transform into complex reasoners and independent adults. In addition, people rely upon one another throughout their lives for protection, nourishment, comfort, care, and the acquisition of goods and resources. Dependency is present throughout the lifespan but is more apparent during the early and late phases of life, and with the presence of disabilities and illnesses."

For MacIntyre, human flourishing means "living well, which results from developing characteristics definitive of what it means to be a person," and of these characteristics he lists two as central: "the capacity to reason and dependence upon other people."[118] Despite their differential accounts of ethics, and the accessibility of the 'ends' of human life,[119] both MacIntyre and Weber offer accounts of how to 'best proceed' in life. Albeit very different, MacIntyre explicates an account of human flourishing based in traditions, virtues, practices, goods and teloi, and the narrative unity of the human life,[120] and Weber an account of the impossibility of rational choice outside a given vocation, and so retreats to a Nietzschean assertion of Will in 'simply choosing' and then excelling at the choice one has made. A withdrawal which makes him fall back on the extreme individualism of Nietzsche, but without – as noted above – the hope which undergirds Nietzsche's idea of overcoming. This individualism leaves us at the mercy of a rationalized society where atomized persons must choose between vocations *which are themselves atomized*. MacIntyre, unlike Weber, moves from the arbitrary starting point of initial choice to an articulation of how one may retrospectively judge that choice, and progress towards better choices. He also allows for individual concerns while balancing larger-scale concerns and influences, such that the individual is not atomized and the social systems they engage with are themselves intertwined. Indeed, it is one of MacIntyre's major critiques of the 'tradition' of liberalism that it has promoted a false understanding of a world where the individual is the alpha and omega of the world, thus

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[118] James B. Wise, "A Conceptualization of Recreation that Contributes to Human Flourishing," 38.

[119] Stoliarova, "The Charisma of Reason during the Re-Enchantment of the World," 2-4, 6-7; MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315. Stoliarova notes Weber's surrender to the rationalized world he saw but critiques his Enlightenment understanding of progress as a unidirectional and fully rational process (even if it was something he felt was only possible within a given vocation, not in an abstract sense), positing instead a "discourse of complexification [which] … forms a theoretical space in which the rational and the extraordinary can coexist without absorbing one another." (7). Weber's account of progress is not determined by ends, but rather by means which have becomes ends-in-themselves (evident in his account of rationalization and the development of capitalism), because of this Weber largely sees the ends of human life as either inaccessible, fully beholden to irrational choice, or completely replaced by means (as if humanity has become 'near-sighted in our ends.'). MacIntyre, on the other hand, argues that progress is possible albeit not in the absolute sense that the Enlightenment posited and Weber claimed failed: "To live well is to act so as to move toward achieving the best goods of which one is capable and so as to become the kind of agent capable of achieving those goods. But there is no particular finite good the achievement of which perfects and completes one's life. There is always something else and something more to be attained, whatever one's attainments. The perfection and completion of a life consists in an agent's having persisted in moving toward and beyond the best goods of which she or he knows." (315).

[120] Wise, "A Conceptualization of Recreation the Contributes to Human Flourishing," 37-41; Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 56-59, 79-90.

blinding persons to the realization that atomization is *not* good, and that humans, *and human-founded social structures*, are – and ought not to be – atomized.[121]

MacIntyre claims that "[t]he unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest,"[122] and that the unity of this narrative quest must be ordered by some conception of human goods.[123] MacIntyre's account of progress is an account of the progress of human communities, human knowledge, and individual human lives – all of which represent narrative quests of their own. In each of these contexts one can flourish in some respect. To flourish is "always to flourish *in virtue* of possessing some set of characteristics,"[124] and this always takes place in a social and historical context where our relationships to the people and institutions (and traditions) around us plays a strong role, either in aiding in our accounts of what it *means* to flourish or in our understandings of the roles or actions *through which we can flourish*.[125] Indeed, to flourish is in part connected with the pedagogical process noted above, as MacIntyre claims that

> What each of us has to do, in order to develop our powers as independent reasoners, and so to flourish *qua* members of our species, is to make the transition from accepting what we are taught by those earliest teachers to making our own independent judgments about goods, judgments we are able to justify rationally to ourselves and to others.[126]

Human flourishing is not a universal account of progress, but rather is specific-*enough* to allow for different kinds of flourishing in relation to different places, times, social contexts, and things

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[121] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 326-88. While a central theme of the book, this critique is well summarized in MacIntyre's points that "My thesis is not that the procedures of the public realm of liberal individualism were cause the psychology of the liberal individual effect nor vice versa. What I am claiming is that each required the other and that in coming together they defined a new social and cultural artefact, 'the individual.' In Aristotelian practical reasoning it is the individual *qua* citizen who reasons; in Thomistic practical reasoning it is the individual *qua* enquirer into his or her good and the good of [their] community… but in the practical reasoning or liberal modernity it is the individual *qua* individual who reasons." (339) This leads to a grave problem for MacIntyre, as the disconnection from social and historical context that this individualism necessarily aims towards leads to a "certain type of rootless cosmopolitanism, the condition of those who aspiring to be at home anywhere … are therefore in an important way citizens of nowhere … [and] [i]t is the fate toward which modernity moves precisely insofar as it is successfully modernizes itself and others by emancipating itself from social, cultural, and linguistic particularity and so from tradition." (388). Liberal modernity, in seeking to 'emancipate' the individual from the collective, has created a monolithic collectivity where all individuals are the same, aimless, 'citizens of nowhere.'

[122] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218.

[123] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218.

[124] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 65, emphasis original.

[125] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 67.

[126] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 71, emphasis original.

which we are seeking to flourish *in*,[127] without falling into amoral relativism. Indeed, human flourishing seems to connect with MacIntyre's account of progress as an *ongoing process*: one who is flourishing - as a *sociologist*, as a *friend*, or as a *human* - is someone in an ongoing state of progressing within the context of the *tradition*, *relationship*, or *species* that they are part of.[128]

MacIntyre's account of human flourishing is in part a naturalist account of human nature. As Fives notes, we do not "flourish simply or solely as independent practical reasoners. We are, and remain, dependent rational animals as well."[129] This is much different from the 'survivalist' account which can be drawn from Weber. In his accounting of scholarship and politics as 'vocations,' Weber gives an account of what it means to be 'good' at such a vocation, to 'succeed,' 'achieve,' 'improve,' within the context of such a vocation, all of which seem to boil down to the question of specialization[130] – which itself relies entirely on what MacIntyre would note as technical skills[131] and goods external to the practice.[132] Not attempting to give any account of human nature, Weber's idea of 'flourishing' would simply be a state of prevailing within the context of a vocation.[133] MacIntyre and Weber diverge not only in relation to questions of *technical skills*, but also in relation to *time*:

> a practice … is never just a set of technical skills, even when directed towards some unified purpose and even if the exercise of those skills can on occasion be valued or enjoyed for their own sake. 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 which are partially definitive of each particular practice or type of practice. *Practices never have a goal or goals fixed for all time* … It therefore turns

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[127] MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 77.
[128] Here again we can see the question of being/becoming floating around the background of MacIntyre's account. See Chapter 2, §2.4.(a).
[129] Allyn John Fives, "Human Flourishing: The Grounds of Moral Judgment," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 42, (2008), 175.
[130] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 11, emphasis original. "Strict specialization is the only way someone in scholarship can possible achieve—perhaps only once in his life and never again—the feeling of having accomplished something that will truly *last*. Any actually competent, decisive achievement must always be specialized."
[131] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193.
[132] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188, emphasis original. "those goods externally and contingently attached to … practices by the accidents of social circumstance … such goods as prestige, status and money. There are always alternative ways for achieving such goods, and their achievement is never to be had *only* by engaging in some particular kind of practice."
[133] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 35 emphasis original. "*If* you take this or that position, science and scholarship show that you must use this or that *means* to help your position prevail in practice."

> out not to be accidental that every practice has its own history and *a history which is more and other than that of the improvement of the relevant technical skills*. This historical dimension is crucial in relation to the virtues.[134]

We can see a major difference here with Weber, who consciously or otherwise presents modernity as the 'end of history,' where one is trapped within an iron cage, disenchanted, where rationalization will continue indefinitely, but 'progress' in an ethical or epistemic sense is vague, at best.[135] More importantly, Weber's account of how to 'survive' such an age by the taking up of a vocation seems to sit as an endless end, entirely composed of the "improvement of the relevant technical skills," a position which MacIntyre rejects.

While there are similarities between Weber and MacIntyre, MacIntyre's account of flourishing contextualizes one within a given tradition or practice. MacIntyre is also attempting to give a naturalist account of the human condition[136] which is particularist and contextualist, but not relativist.[137] Indeed, what may be seen as Weber's 'account of flourishing' is actually an account of how one is to participate *successfully* in a rationalized world, to increase one's station in relation to questions of *calculability* and *instrumental function* – to survive and perhaps 'succeed' in a disenchanted world.[138] None of these elements have anything to do with questions of virtues or goods.

This is obviously a very different position from MacIntyre's. Weber's account is a 'first-aid kit' specifically for a disenchanted world – MacIntyre's is an account which has room for historical specificity, but which can generally be placed upon human beings in any place or time. Weber seeks survival, MacIntyre flourishing. Weber offers a means to "find and obey the daemon that holds in its hands the threads of our *own* life,"[139] while MacIntyre offers an account "marked

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[134] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193-94, emphasis added.
[135] We can see here a hopelessness which is similar, but different, from the *eternal recurrence of the same* which Nietzsche takes up. Where Nietzsche would see a repetition of phenomena, Weber sees us as being 'trapped by progress.' But this ends in the 'end of history,' with just such an endless repetition of phenomena. So, while he took a slightly different route, he ends in a similar place to Nietzsche. See Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist,* and Francis Fukuyama, "Entering Post-History," New Perspectives Quarterly, 6, no. 3, (1989):49-52; Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.
[136] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 53, emphasis original. "[H]uman-nature-as-it-happens-to-be (human nature in its untutored state) is initially discrepant and discordant with the precepts of ethics and needs to be transformed by the instruction of practical reason and experience into human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*."
[137] Fives, "Human Flourishing," 167.
[138] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 18
[139] Weber, "The Scholar's Work," 42, emphasis original.

by deep, ethical involvement in social endeavors. The outcomes of these cooperative enterprises enrich people's lives and contribute to a better society."[140] Having compared and contrasted some of the classics of sociological theory and MacIntyre, we will now turn to the deployment of MacIntyre as a tool for contemporary sociology – both theoretical and applied – by taking the work of Bourdieu as a case-study in the following chapter.

[140] Wise, "A Conceptualization of Recreation that Contributes to Human Flourishing," 41.

SECTION 5: IN DIALOGUE WITH SOCIOLOGY: APPLYING MACINTYRE

Chapter 7: Moving towards a MacIntyrean Sociology

In Section 1 we discussed the importance of bringing MacIntyre into dialogue with sociology and laid out an account of what this dialogue might look like. Over the course of Sections 2, 3, and 4 we engaged with the works of MacIntyre, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Weber. In each Section it was noted how social theory is necessarily historically located, with present thinkers responding – directly or indirectly – to previous ones, and how these responses can be dialogical, even *in absentia* of a physical participant. In Section 5 we will bring this history-spanning movement of ideas to a head by asking what value MacIntyre might bring to contemporary sociology.

It is important at this point to re-emphasis that the question of applying MacIntyre to sociology is not merely depositing him as a toolbox full of random concepts (although he serves that purpose well), but as a disciplinary-level means of methodological, theoretical, and metatheoretical critique. It has already been demonstrated that MacIntyre shares a common history with many contemporary sociologists. Given his engagement with Marx and Weber, by his own standards, the tradition within which he operates (Aristotelian-Thomism) is translatable with some of traditions which run throughout sociology, with the Aristotelian influence on Marx, and the shared Marxian and Weberian concerns which MacIntyre has engaged with even after moving away from Marxism as a political project. This potential translatability once more raises the question we began with: why is MacIntyre underutilized within sociology?

While there may be many reasons which could be given why sociologists have largely ignored MacIntyre – seeing him as not critical enough, too conservative, too Catholic, or too communitarian – many of these so-called justifications have hopefully been dispelled in the course of this work as misrepresentations of MacIntyre's actual positions.[1] But as we near the end of this historical dialogue, it is becoming clear that the question of 'why?' is of little practical import. Of more value is the question of 'what is to be done?'

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[1] See Chapter 1, §1.4 & Chapter 2, §2.10.(b) & (d) for his rejections of these positions. While there is not anything *inherently* unsociological about, say, conservative or communitarian positions, it is important that these positions are rejected given that the way I am proposing of deploying MacIntyre within sociology is to the end of engaging and challenging a range of so-called critical sociology *without* falling into conservative structural functionalism.

To answer the question of how MacIntyre ought to be applied within sociology, we will begin in Chapter 7 by providing a brief layout of the contemporary state of sociology (§7.1), tracing its history as a tradition which has been interdisciplinary since its inception (§7.1.[a]). We will then identify the rising trend of 'public sociology' (§7.1.[b]) before putting forward the argument that Pierre Bourdieu represents an exemplar of this trend (§7.2). To do this, we will have to first address a range of caveats about using any individual theorist as an exemplar of any tradition or trend in thought (§7.2.[a]), after which we will dive into some of Bourdieu's core theories including habitus and field (§7.2.[b]), as well as the diversification of Marx's concept of capital (§7.2.[c]). From here we will identify a range of problems in the claims of so-called 'public sociology' founded on some of the premises which Bourdieu proceeds from (§7.2.[d]), before turning to the question of what Bourdieu's claims look like through a MacIntyrean lens (§7.2.[e]). This will lead us to asking the question of whether Macintyre can help address some of the issues raised about Bourdieusian public sociology (§7.2.[f]).

This return to MacIntyre will provide the catalyst for questioning what a more 'MacIntyrean' sociology might look like (§7.3). Specifically we will discuss the idea of sociology as a tradition of inquiry (§7.3.[a]), how MacIntyre doesn't throw the methodological baby out with the positivist bathwater (§7.3.[b]), how he addresses the problematics of relativism without falling into some kind of structural determinism (§7.3.[c]), and the way empirical field work and research methods could be reflexively engaged with in such a MacIntyrean sociology (§7.3.[d]). From here we will turn to the concluding Chapter 8. The conclusion will return to the question of dialogue to review the manner in which we have proceeded drawing the different interlocutors and traditions of thought into conversation with one another (§8.1), as well as reviewing what MacIntyre as a theorist might offer contemporary sociology, both on a case-by-case basis of concept deployment and on a metatheoretical, discipline-level basis (§8.2), and we shall conclude by addressing how such a MacIntyrean approach might respond to some of the challenges which have been, and likely will be, raised by many within the discipline to aid in opening sociologists to good-faith dialogue with the idea of a MacIntyrean turn within sociology broadly understood (§8.3).

7.1. What Does Contemporary Sociology Look Like?

There are many theoretical traditions which have contributed to contemporary sociology, including but not limited to critical race theory, Marxian theory, feminist theory, structural functionalism,

poststructuralism/postmodernism, anticolonial theory, Frankfurt School critical theory, interactionism, etc. This multifaceted theoretical background to the fabric of contemporary sociology is often confusing, sometimes contradictory, and seemingly aimless at time. Despite this, themes can be identified at different times in the history of sociology, from the dominance of positivist philosophies of social science and structural functionalism at the end of the 19th Century, to the rise of critical theory with the Frankfurt School from the late 1930s onwards, to the linguistic turn and rise of postmodernism in the late 1960s.[2] Each of these theoretical themes has its origins in a wide range of traditions, both inside sociology and beyond, and it is to this latter point I will now turn to preface the contemporary theme which I will be focused on.

7.1.(a) Sociology as a Discipline with a History of 'Drawing from the Outside'

Sociology, as noted in Section 1, has since its inception been a discipline which has stood on the shoulders of a range of theoretical giants. While the same could be said of any academic discipline, what makes sociology perhaps distinct is that this interweaving of a range of theoretical influences has continued beyond the birth pains of the discipline. Indeed, this very claim is supported by MacIntyre, who noted that

> Economics is defined by its methods, not by its subject-matter. Political science is defined by its subject-matter and not by its methods. Psychology is partially defined by methods and partly defined by subject matter. In the natural sciences there are of course similar contrasts to be found. But what there is no parallel to in the relations of the natural sciences to each other is the relationship of sociology to the other social sciences. For on the one hand sociology, using as it does a wide variety of methods, and approaching an even wider range of subject-matters, might seem to be almost a residual category, a rag-bag containing everything social and human not appropriated by economics, political science, or psychology. But on the other hand, for precisely the same reasons, sociology may be taken to be the master science of the human sciences, raising questions about possible relationships to which the more limited inquiries may blind themselves by the very fact of their being limited.[3]

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[2] It is also important to keep in mind as well the impact that extra-theoretical social-historical influences such as the shift from the structural functionalism resonating with post-war American optimism to the rise of 1960s-70s counterculture and its intertwining with critical theory. It is important also to note the two-way directionality of this influence, for instance the impact structural functionalism had on American social policy, and the influence early Frankfurt School theory had on later counterculture, as well as vice versa.

[3] Dorothy Emmet and Alasdair MacIntyre, "Introduction," in *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis*, (Glasgow, UK: Robert Maclehose and Co., Ltd., 1972), xi.

All the way to the present-day sociology has continued its engagement with other disciplines and traditions of thought, as well as its own disciplinary history – a phenomenon which represents both a strength and a point of confusion (if not necessarily a weakness) in the eyes of other disciplines. For instance, biology students are likely to learn of Darwin in an intro class, and rarely engage with him again in any substantial way – the same is largely true of most natural sciences – because of the assumption of scientific progress of knowledge which makes historical (re)engagement not only unnecessary, but wasteful. This represents part of Kuhn's critique of the scientific assumption of accretion, and his account of how 'classics' like Galileo are only engaged in reference to their historical peers.[4] Indeed, the "rigorous and rigid" nature of modern scientific education imposes the most contemporary answers to essential questions firmly upon the minds of each discipline's practitioners in a manner which makes historical dialogue seem beyond the horizon of practical consideration,[5] especially given that such a history is too often considered "a purely descriptive discipline" despite it representing a body of "interpretive and sometimes normative" tools for analysis and re-evaluation.[6] Thus, historical re-evaluation, as well as interdisciplinary consideration, largely fall outside of the 'disciplinary culture' of the natural sciences.[7] Seeking to build its authority on methods and paradigms undergirding the natural sciences, psychology has largely followed this same process, and rarely does more than pay lip service to the work of Wilhelm Wundt and William James, for instance, let alone dialogically engage with and re-consider their thoughts in contemporary contexts. Drawing from Kuhn, what might be called this 'normal scientific' position would critique sociology in this regard, but as I will proceed to argue,

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[4] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3. See also his discussions on 'normal science' and the way it builds upon – and relates to – various historical traditions of scientific research (10-22)

[5] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 5. A process which arguable contributes to Kuhn's claim of the necessary development of revolutionary paradigm shifts across the history of science, and how even though science claims to be open to all falsifications of theory in a Popperian sense, it actually represents a series of paradigms incapable of logical dialogue (92-110). Interestingly, this position parallel's MacIntyre's account of traditions of inquiry, which seeks to move beyond Kuhn's claim about the circularity of paradigms whereby there is an essential incommensurability between paradigms which requires willful choice (in the manner of Weber in the choosing of a vocation), rather than rational argumentation.

[6] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 8.

[7] This of course requires caveats, given conscious attempts to expand the horizon of disciplinary consideration, to overcome some of problems Weber identified within over-specialized fields. An example which could be given might be landscape ecology's attempt to expand on the siloing of specialization in biology.

this engagement with the discipline's history instead represents a strength of sociology (and a weakness to the 'normal scientific' disciplines).

As a strength, this openness to interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange, as well as historical re-evaluation, has kept sociology beholden to the potential falsification of its theories, to a wider extent than most disciplines. It has also helped push back against the siloing of academic considerations which Weber was so worried about, and which has continued to worsen in the contemporary moment across academic disciplines. This openness has often been viewed as problematic by those both inside and outside the discipline, however.

Many disciplines have very clearly distinguished borders, especially the natural sciences. Sociology, however, has always had fuzzy boundaries (despite the efforts of some within the discipline, especially in the early days of structural functionalism). This has led to the oft-repeated phenomenon of having to explain in introductory classes not what sociology *really* is (dispelling misconceptions), but rather explaining *what sociology is in the first places* (creating conceptions to fill the void in students' minds). Unlike physics, psychology, history, and architecture, most don't come to the discipline of sociology with any preconception, and arguably the fuzziness of sociology's history, theory, and methods have not helped this issue. This fuzziness is further complicated by the question of 'what is the object of sociological study?' a question which has haunted the discipline since its origins. Indeed, this has been an issue of such concern that the Gulbenkian Commission attempted to question the fuzziness of these boundaries and the discipline's directionality, aiming to more explicitly direct the social sciences over the next 50 years.[8] The results of the Commission – which held meetings between 1994-95 involving academics from the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities from all over the world – were published in 1996 under the title *Open the Social Sciences* and edited by Immanuel Wallerstein.[9] These concerns were followed up in 2004 by Wallerstein's later works *The Uncertainties of Knowledge* and *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, where he largely

[8] Immanuel Wallerstein, (Ed.), *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*, (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503616219

[9] The claims in this publication were critiqued by Michael Burawoy, who noted that the claims of the Commission were aimless and had little in the way of actionable claims. See Michael Burawoy, "Open the Social Sciences: To Whom and For What?" *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 6, no. 3, (2007).

explained the fragmentation of the discipline(s) primarily through reference to external factors such as social institutional differentiation in 'core societies' and colonial rule in 'the periphery,' taking a more social and less theoretical/paradigmatic approach to Kuhn.

Despite these seeming 'holes' in the discipline, any historiographic account of this or that discipline – whether in the *Naturwissenschafte* or *Geisteswissenschafte* – will show that the idea of disciplines having distinct and unmoving borders is a myth, to the point of becoming ideological in some places. Even before Kuhn[10] it has been clear that academic disciplines are constantly in a state of flux. This indeed represents one of MacIntyre's contributions to sociology: a framework of traditions through which *sociology itself* can become self-aware, understanding itself as *both* interdisciplinary in its origins *and* a contemporary working tradition, distinguishing itself as distinct without 'closing the border.' The pros and cons noted above can co-exist in a manner which is not only rational, but essential to the health of sociology as a discipline. But before getting ahead of ourselves, we need to identify an emerging trend in contemporary sociology: so-called 'public sociology.'

7.1.(b) 'Public' Sociology as a Rising Trend

While the idea of sociology studying public happenings has existed for more or less its entire history, the idea that sociology ought to be integrated with, or beholden to, the public is a relatively new one. While there are different definitions of what 'public sociology' means,[11] one common theme is the drive to "develop innovative approaches for communicating sociological research to multiple publics."[12] Bourdieu argues that this is in part a response to the 'Sokal affair,' and the undermining of public trust in the social sciences which resulted from it,[13] a phenomenon which can be seen as continuing through further distancing of opinion and support for the 'ivory tower' by the general public through political maneuvering,[14] alienation due to perceived biases[15] and the

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[10] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
[11] The term was popularized by Michael Burawoy, see below for further engagement with him.
[12] "Resource Centre for Public Sociology," *York University Department of Sociology*, Website, 30 March, 2024.
[13] Pierre Bourdieu, "Introduction," in *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 1.
[14] Joseph Margulies and Hope Metcalf, "Terrorizing Academia," *Journal of Legal Education*, 60, no.3 (2010): 433-71.
[15] Jan Hajda, "Alienation and Integration of Student Academics," *American Sociological Review*, 26, no. 5, (Oct, 1961): 758-77. Many members of the public feel alienated from the academy due to the perceived 'liberal bias' therein. See Charlie Tyson and Naomi Oreskes, "The American University, the Politics of Professors, and the

arrogance or incompetence of 'experts,'[16] the rise and cementation of neoliberal policies,[17] and further events mirroring the Sokal affair.[18] While the concerns about how integrated academics are in the wider community have festered in some form or another for a long time,[19] there is a notable widening of the gap between academic and non-academic communities since at *least* the late 1980s.[20]

Edward A. Shils argued that intellectuals are alienated from the wider public by virtue of being intellectuals:

> In all societies, even in those in which the intellectuals are notable for their conservatism, the diverse paths for creativity, as well as inevitable tendency towards negativism, impel a partial rejection of the prevailing system of cultural values. The very process of elaboration and development … of the potentialities inherent in a 'system' of cultural values … involves a measure of rejection.[21]

This inherent disconnect between academia and wider society, when combined with the shaken faith of the Sokal affair and other events of like effect,[22] makes a concern for bridging the gap between a given discipline and wider society a question of disciplinary survival as much as an issue of epistemic responsibility. Collins and Evans claimed that science, "if it can deliver the

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Narrative of 'Liberal Bias'," in *The Social Production of Knowledge in a Neoliberal Age: Debating the Challenges Facing Higher Education*, (eds.) Justin Cruickshank and Ross Abbinnett, (Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 79-102.

[16] For discussion of the complexity of expertise and its relation to public, or 'non-expert,' opinion, see Nico Stehr and Reiner Grundmann, *Experts: The Knowledge and Power of Expertise*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014); Marian Adolf and Nico Stehr, *Knowledge*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014); Nico Stehr (ed.), *The Governance of Knowledge*, (ed.) Nico Stehr, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017); Harry Collins and Robert Evans, *Rethinking Expertise*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004).

[17] Richard G. Jones, Jr. and Bernadette Marie Calafell, "Contesting Neoliberalism through Critical Pedagogy, Intersectional Reflexivity, and Personal Narrative: Queer Tales of Academia," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59, (2012): 957-81.

[18] Yascha Mounk, "What an Audacious Hoax Reveals About Academia," *The Atlantic* online, 30 March, 2024, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/new-sokal-hoax/572212/.

[19] Jan Hajda, "Alienation and Integration of Student Academics," 758-77. See also the differing opinions represented in Richard E. Dimond, "Popular Opinion is Not Empirical Data," *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 2, no. 4 (1974): 264-70, on the one hand, and Asit Biswas and Julian Kirchherr, "Citations Are Not Enough: Academic Promotion Panels Must Take Into Account a Scholar's Presence in Popular Media." *Impact of Social Sciences Blog* (2015).

[20] Michael Bérubé, "Public Perceptions of Universities and Faculty," *Academe*, 82, no. 4, (Jul-Aug., 1996): 10-17.

[21] Edward A. Shils, "The Intellectuals and the Powers: Some Perspectives for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1 (1958): 8.

[22] See fn. 175 later in this Chapter for elaboration.

truth, cannot deliver it at the speed of politics,"[23] and in doing so identified that the *speed* at which academia can respond to the questions of an increasingly impatient public only risks widening this gap.

This festering distrust of academia continued to escalate in the early 1990s, especially within North America with the debates around 'political correctness.'[24] Having introduced the term 'public intellectual' in 1987, Russell Jacoby helped with his work *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* to bring the still-much-debated question of what public role academics ought to play to the centre stage of both academic and non-academic communities.[25] Jacoby's argument that the connection between 'intellectual' and 'public' goes without saying in some cases, especially the French intellectual traditions,[26] is supported by the large amount of academic engagement with the political movements of the 1960s. While these movements were largely student-led,[27] the wider public engagement of academics, and the vicissitudes of the relationship between 'academia' and various 'publics,' can be seen in the careers and actions of the likes of Foucault on the one hand – engaged in a range of political and student actions[28] – and Marcuse on the other hand – seemingly hopeless about the potential for critique and social change.[29] It may initially seem that Foucault was in the right, as the "joke history had in store for Marcuse was, of course, that almost immediately after he had declared critique exhausted and practical intervention in the world fruitless, the upheaval of the 1960's proved him, at least to many observers, woefully wrong."[30] Despite this, the failure of post-1968 radical politics lead to a rise in neo-liberalism in France and elsewhere,[31] which seemed to in a way vindicate Marcuse's seeming lack of hope. Indeed, Jay argues that "if perhaps less than precise in the short run, it is not

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[23] Harry Collins and Robert Evans, "Why Expertise?" in *Rethinking Expertise*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 1. See also the discussion by Stehr and Grundmann in "Social Change and the Crisis of the Scientific Expertise," in *Experts: The Knowledge and Power of Expertise*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 93-116.
[24] Bérubé, "Public Perceptions of Universities and Faculty," 12.
[25] Russell Jacoby, "After 'The Last Intellectuals'," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 62, no. 14, (2015): B6.
[26] Jacoby, "After 'The Last Intellectuals'," B6.
[27] Mark Edelman Boren, *Student Resistance: A History of the Unruly Subject*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 2.
[28] Johnathan Simons, *Foucault and the Political*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 10-12.
[29] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Herbert Marcuse: From Marxism to Pessimism," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (Eds.). Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 339-48.
[30] Martin Jay, "Irony and Dialectics: *One-dimensional Man* and 1968," *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 63, no. 234 (Sep-Dec., 2018): 69.
[31] Simons, Foucault and the Political, 11.

so clear that *One-dimensional Man* was mistaken in its general observations about the ways in which capitalism had succeeded in blunting or containing forces that purported to subvert it."[32]

While Marcuse was to go on to adapt his position to be one more supportive of the student-lead protests of 1968, he is criticized by MacIntyre on various fronts for this. First is the elements which Marcuse lists as 'revolutionary forces' which include 1) the genuinely poor, 2) the middle-class white Students for a Democratic Society, and 3) the bureaucracies of non-Western countries, with the second representing what "Lenin diagnosed as left-wing communism, an infantile disease," and the third "right-wing communism, and oligarchical disease."[33] MacIntyre went on to critique Marcuse's later position, and by extension much of so-called 'critical' academia, in the form of the 'aesthetics of radicalism:'

> Flower power, the language of the hippie subculture, that of soul culture, the use of four-letter words, mark, so Marcuse claims, a new sensibility which breaks with the culture of the market. What traditional Marxism saw as petty-bourgeois bohemia close[ly] allied to the *Lumpenproletariat* has become in Marcuse's latest theoretical stance the potential catalyst for change.[34]

Marcuse – so MacIntyre argues – shifted from abandoning hope in critique, to idealizing student protests "who have produced the first parent-financed revolts in what is more like a new version of the children's crusade than a revolutionary movement."[35]

MacIntyre notes that there is a good reason why traditional Marxism was suspicious of such movements as those Marcuse had moved to hold up as revolutionary, as

> The sensibility of bohemia effectively cuts it off from the vast mass of mankind on whom the bohemians are in economic fact parasitic. … But this isolation in values of bohemia is just what Marcuse values and the problem of communication … [or] joint action with the majority does not arise, because the majority are to be objects of benevolent revolutionary concern, not subjects with an autonomous voice of their own.[36]

Arguably this is why the student revolts of 1968 failed to establish permanent political change – and in fact in many cases lead to a rise of right-wing reactionism – because of the inherently

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[32] Jay, "Irony and Dialectics," 69, emphasis original.
[33] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, (London, UK: Collins & Co. Ltd, 1970), 88-89.
[34] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, 89, emphasis original.
[35] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, 89.
[36] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, 89.

alienating approach to the 'wider public' combined with the cultural arrogance of the bohemian attitude. As MacIntyre went on to note, both Marx and Lenin knew that merely being "in conflict with the established order is not necessarily to be an agent of liberation."[37] The consequences of movements such as this, often fermented in the relative isolation of academia and then 'imposed' upon the wider community frequently leads to precisely this: rejection of whatever message is attempting to be passed on by those engaged in this or that struggle by the wider non-academic community. Marcuse seems to have swung from one end of the spectrum to the other: hopeless for the potential of critique emerging from society, to poorly articulating a petty-bourgeois revolutionary community. In doing so, he seems to have also swung from a social science which is seen as instrumentally useless due to its lack of direction or 'social contribution,' to a social science which is seen as threatening to the wider community's cultural and political stability. On both ends I argue, and I'm sure MacIntyre would agree, Marcuse has missed the mean of what academia could be. In his struggle to escape the moment he has failed to see or seek the potential good of academia.

It is in response to a combination of the above themes that 'public sociology' has emerged,[38] attempting to be intelligible to the general public so as not to alienate them from the discipline and wider academia, to dispel the idea that academics are 'the enemy,' to institute change in a manner which is distinct from the occasional outburst of riotous anger in the manner of 1968, and to create open channels of dialogue which allow the discipline to respond to claims of methodological insufficiency or academic incompetence in a manner which would have effect.

7.2. Using Bourdieu as an Exemplar of Public Sociology

This question of a sociology open to the public, wherein intellectuals are once again public figures, is one which has been pursued by Pierre Bourdieu throughout a large portion of his career, especially in his later works. Interestingly parallel to MacIntyre in many ways, including his early engagement with Marx, with a specific focus on the young Marx, and his reaction to the rise of

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[37] MacIntyre, *Marcuse*, 89.

[38] While for the sake of brevity in this chapter I will be focusing on 'public sociology' and Bourdieu, it is important to note that there *are* other approaches, such as Collins and Evans' realist approach which seeks to claim that "even in the face of the new Weltanshauung, with its distrust of science, expertise can be identified independent of its social attribution." See Harry Collins and Robert Evans, "Science, the Citizen, and Social Science," in *Rethinking Expertise*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009): 141.

Stalinism in the 1950s,[39] Bourdieu represents a figure who has straddled multiple disciplines – most notable anthropology, sociology, and philosophy – and has attempted to interconnect them into an articulate and unified program of (public) social science.[40]

Identifying the importance of engagement with those outside one's immediate academic circle, Bourdieu pointed out that the logic of the interview can become a genuine dialogue, which

> has the effect of removing one of the main forms of censorship which the fact of belonging to a scientific field can impose, one that may be so deeply internalized that its presence is not even suspected: that which prevents you from answering, in writing itself, questions which, from the professional's point of view, can only appear as trivial or unacceptable. Furthermore, when a well-intentioned interlocutor puts forward, in all good faith, his reservations or resistance, or when he acts as the devil's advocate by voicing objections or criticisms he has read or heard, he can give you an opportunity either to state quite fundamental propositions that the elliptical style of academic dignity or the proprieties of scientific etiquette lead you to conceal, or to give explanations, denials, or refutations that the disdain or the disgusted aroused by the destructive over-simplifications of incomprehension and incompetence or by the stupid or based accusations of bad faith tempt you to reject.[41]

Engagement with the 'other,' whether an academic of a different field or discipline, or of a member of the general public, is an important – indeed crucial – phenomenon which must take place for Bourdieu, as it is necessary to help make explicit foundational ideas not only to the interlocutor(s), but to the academic for whom they might have remained tacit otherwise.

While response to the questions which this or that interlocutor raise will necessarily differ based on whether they lie within, outside, or adjacent to, one's academic field,

> This does not mean that there is not one true answer to each of these questions and that this truth does not always need to be stated. But when, like me, you feel that you owe it to yourself to concentrate in each case on the point where you expect the maximum resistance, which is the exact opposite of having any demagogic intentions, and to tell each audience, without being provocative but also without making any concessions, the aspect of the truth which it will find most difficult to

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[39] Pierre Bourdieu, "Fieldwork in Philosophy," in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, (trans.), Matthew Adamson, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 3.
[40] A phenomenon much in keeping with Wallerstein's cry for the dissolving of disciplinary boundaries. See Immanuel Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," in *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 169-70.
[41] Pierre Bourdieu, "Preface," in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, (trans.), Matthew Adamson, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), viii.

> accept … making use of the knowledge you think you have of its expectations so as not to flatter and manipulate it, but to 'get across', as they say, what it will find most difficult to accept or to swallow … you know that you always run the risk of seeing socio-analysis turn into a socio-drama.[42]

Bourdieu clearly was aware not only of the need for communication between academia and the wider community, but the nuance required in making it effective rather than coming across as pedantic or arrogant – precisely one of the problems which contributes to poor public opinion of academics in the contemporary moment (aided of course by various anti-intellectual political discourses in the post-Trump era).

Much like MacIntyre's concerns about practices being corrupted by institutional interests, Bourdieu raises the concern of the subsumption of the sciences to economic concerns.[43] While it might seem like the social sciences are not in a position to contribute to the market in the same way as various STEM fields, in fact

> Social scientists, especially sociologists, are the object of very great solicitude, whether it be positive – and often very profitable, materially and symbolically, for those who opt to serve the dominant vision, if only by omission (and in this case, scientific inadequacy suffices) – or negative, and malignant, sometimes even destructive, for those who, just by practicing their craft, contribute to unveiling a little of the truth of the social world.[44]

Parallel to the above comments regarding the swinging pendulum of Marcuse's epistemic and political positions, Bourdieu identifies several problems in the contemporary moment for sociologists: the pressure to either conform to some degree – with any degree being problematic – to the market's desires (whether that market be economic or political is unimportant), or to resist these pressures and by virtue of doing so be seen as threatening to the wider public. On the one hand, you have a poor sociologist who becomes a rich person,[45] on the other you have a rich sociologist who risks not only economic poverty, but political and – in some cases – academic poverty as well.[46]

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[42] Bourdieu, "Preface," ix.
[43] Pierre Bourdieu, "Foreword," in *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004), vii.
[44] Bourdieu, "Foreword," viii.
[45] Certain university presidents, for example.
[46] Any sociologist critically engaged with the study of Palestine currently, for instance.

To counter these problems, Bourdieu proposes repeatedly throughout his career a move towards public sociology, often under the title of 'reflexive sociology.' Loic J. D. Wacquant notes how Bourdieu doesn't seek a definite theory or set of concepts, but a *generalized disposition toward sociological intervention in the world.* He does so by "inverting the accepted order of pedagogy: his teaching proceeds from practice to axiomatics and from application back to principles."[47] This ground-level concern, and practice-oriented development of sociological theory, seeks to "counter the intellectualist bias inherent in the situation of academic training," evident in Bourdieu's "anti-intellectualist philosophy of practice."[48] Bourdieu advocates and adopts "a total and self-referential pedagogy that steadfastly refuses the splintering of theoretical and research operations into isolated activities and territories whose separation serves only to reproduce the accepted—and forced—division of scientific labour of the day."[49] While there are similarities in terms of the focus on practices, and the living out of theory between Bourdieu and MacIntyre which will continue to come to light as we move forward, it is important to note here that Bourdieu's anti-intellectualist approach seeks to invite the wider lay-public into sociology by simultaneously binding sociologists to the *doing* of sociology and the *theorizing* of sociology. This grounded approach undermines the aloof and disconnected trend within academia which makes it inaccessible, and even unintelligible, to the wider lay-public.

Again, in a manner not dissimilar in concern and reference to MacIntyre, Bourdieu notes that

> the emergence of *institutionalized* education is accompanied by a crisis of *diffuse* education which moves directly from practice to practice without passing through discourse. Excellence (that is, practical mastery in its accomplished form) has ceased to exist once people start asking whether it can be taught, as soon as they seek to base 'correct' practices on rules extracted, for the purpose of transmission, as in all academicisms, from the practices of earlier periods or their products.[50]

At first glance, these 'academicisms' Bourdieu notes seem similar to MacIntyre's traditions-theoretic approach. Despite this, "the 'deviation' that is denounced in the term *academicism* is

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[47] Loic J. D. Wacquant, "Preface," in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), xii.
[48] Loic J. D. Wacquant, "Preface," xiii.
[49] Wacquant, "Preface," xiii.
[50] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Work of Time," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 103, emphasis added.

inherent in every attempt to make explicit and codify a practice that is not based on knowledge of the real principles of that practice."[51] MacIntyre's focus on practices, practical philosophy, and using traditions of thought as *living contexts* for the asking and answering of questions which relate to the world, challenges this account of academicism, and so the concern with questions of the practical as they relate to the theoretical are shared by *both* MacIntyre and Bourdieu.

7.2.(a) Caveats – Other Exemplars, Other Sociologies, and the Problematics of Critiquing an Exemplar

Any attempt to take an individual as representative of a style of thought is inherently problematic. Do they represent *the* exemplar of a field? Are there other options, and if so, how can one choose between them? What of radically oppositional approaches? By critiquing an exemplar, are we merely attacking a strawman? These and other questions jump to mind.

Despite this, there is a long tradition in sociology of developing and deploying *ideal-types*. In order to give precise meaning to terms like 'public sociology'

> it is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms of action in which each case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration by virtue of their complete adequacy on the level of meaning. But precisely because this is true, it is probably seldom if ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to one of these ideally constructed pure types. The case is similar to a physical reaction which has been calculated on the assumption of an absolute vacuum.[52]

It is precisely because of such a lack of social and historical vacuum that the idea of taking Bourdieu as an ideal-typical representation of a recent style in sociological thinking is not only feasible, but reasonable. Weber argues that ideal types often are formed by

> The one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present, and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct.[53]

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[51] Bourdieu, "The Work of Time," 103, emphasis original.
[52] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 20.
[53] Max Weber, "Sociology and Science" in *Sociological Writings*, (ed.) Wolf Heydebrand, (New York, NY: Continuum, 1994), 263-64.

A construct which, as already noted, "cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia."[54] The value of such a concept, in cases both rational and irrational, is that it allows sociological analysis to abstract "from reality and at the same time [help] us to understand it, in that it shows with what degree of approximation a concrete historical phenomenon can be subsumed under one or more of these concepts."[55]

It might be replied that an ideal-type is necessarily an "abstract synthesis of those traits which are common to numerous concrete phenomena,"[56] and so surely treating a concrete individual as an ideal-type runs counter to its use as a sociological concept. Such a response would, of course, be correct. The importance of returning briefly to ideal-types as a concept is to parallel the idea of an exemplar with one already engaged with in this work. For an *ideal-type* is a general synthetic concept, representative of an often diverse-but-overlapping field of description, and an *exemplar* is an individual who suitably interconnects a sufficiently diverse range of positions which overlap in the field of which they are supposed to be an exemplar of. While the former is necessarily a utopia, the latter can be thought of as a sort of 'applied ideal-type,' as a case-study for a field.

Of course, justifying whether an exemplar sufficiently overlaps this or that area of this or that field will likely be an open question, but much like with ideal-types, the point is not to create an 'ought'[57] or a 'law'[58] out of this, but rather to create a heuristic tool with which to engage a much wider field than would otherwise be feasible outside a dedicated and focused career. Parsons noted that the "ideal type contains no *particular* statements of fact. But it does, logically, involve a fixed relation between the values of the various variable elements involved. … This is not, of course, to say in any simple sense that it is 'wrong,' but only that it is limited in certain respects."[59] Indeed, Weber notes that "[t]he more sharply and precisely the ideal type has been constructed … the more abstract and unrealistic" it is, and "the better it is able to perform its functions in

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[54] Weber, "Sociology and Science," 264.
[55] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 20.
[56] Weber, "Sociology and Science," 266.
[57] Weber, "Sociology and Science," 265.
[58] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 18.
[59] Talcott Parsons, (ed.), "Weber's Methodology in Social Science," in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (trans.) A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), 13, emphasis added.

formulating terminology, classifications, and hypotheses."[60] In this vein, taking anyone as an 'exemplar' of a field in the manner I am presenting it is not to say that they represent the normative telos of the field in question, but rather that insofar as the debates, claims, concepts, and directions of a given field are addressed or overlapped by the work of the exemplar, questions asked or critiques levied against the exemplar are representative of questions asked or critiques levied against the field. This is a necessarily imperfect process, as an exemplar – like with an ideal-type – cannot stand astride all areas of debate without dissolving entirely into the background as an object of inquiry. Despite these concerns, Bourdieu represents a major influence on not just European, but North American sociology in a way few other academics do.[61]

So, while there may be other sociologists engaged with the question of public sociology,[62] other thinkers who take stances which challenge the academy, and others who radically oppose public sociology,[63] I have chosen Bourdieu as my theoretical (*not* normative) exemplar because of his career-long engagement with questions which have been taken up in-turn across the breadth of sociology. To draw on Burawoy, who popularized the term 'public sociology' in recent years, we can see that it is the intersection of *reflexive knowledge* and *extra-academic audiences* which makes up public sociology,[64] and these are two areas of continuous and deep concern and engagement for Bourdieu throughout his career. Indeed, Burawoy's account of public sociology makes use of Bourdieusian analysis as a central component to critiquing the academy.[65]

From here we will look at some of the core concepts which Bourdieu has developed throughout his career, with which he has attempted to ground his account of public sociology.

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[60] Weber, *Economy and Society: Volume 1*, 21.
[61] Michèle Lamont, "Has Bourdieu Been Good to Think With? The Case of the United States," *Sociological Forum*, 27, no. 1 (March, 2012): 228-37. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2011.01309.x
[62] See for example Michael Burawoy, "For Public Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, 70, no. 1, (Feb 2005): 4-28; Michael Burawoy, "The Critical Turn to Public Sociology," *Critical Sociology*, 31, no. 3, (2005): 313-26; Michael Burawoy, *Public Sociology: Between Utopia and Anti-Utopia*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021); Michael Burawoy, "The World Needs Public Sociology," *Sosiologisk Tidsskrift*, 12, (2004), 255-72; Craig Calhoun, "The Promise of Public Sociology," *British Journal of Sociology*, 56, no. 3, (2005): 355-63.
[63] See for example Jonathan H. Turner, "Is Public Sociology Such a Good Idea?" *The American Sociologist*, 36, no. 3/4, (Fall/Winter, 2005): 27-45; Axel Van Den Berg, "Public Sociology, Professional Sociology, and Democracy," in *The Public Sociology Debate: Ethics and Engagement*, (eds.) Ariane Hanemaayer and Christopher J. Schneider, (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 53-76; Tony Christensen, "No Path to Paradise: Deconstructing the Promise of Public Sociology," *The American Sociologist*, 44, (2013), 23-41; Rahsaan Mahadeo, "A Call for Counter-Public Sociology," *Critical Sociology*, (2023), 1-21.
[64] Burawoy, "The World Needs Public Sociology," 262.
[65] Van Den Berg, "Public Sociology, Professional Sociology, and Democracy," 53.

After this we will ask the question of whether such an account can indeed be grounded, at least with the means provided by Bourdieu, before moving to asking the question of what a MacIntyrean sociology might look like, and what it might offer that current accounts of public sociology lack.

7.2.(b) Habitus & Field

Two concepts which have undergirded both Bourdieu's own fieldwork – and the application of Bourdieu by others – are habitus and field.[66] To discuss one is necessarily to discuss the other, as all habitus develop in the social and historical context of a series of given fields, and all fields are reproduced by the habitus they inculcate. While I am choosing to start with field, I am *not* doing so to imply that Bourdieu takes a top-down deterministic approach of explaining how individuals are influenced by society and social groups. Indeed, "[t]he very notion of field implies that we transcend the conventional opposition between structure and history, conservation and transformation, for the relations of power which form the structure provide the underpinnings of both resistance to domination and resistance to subversion."[67] As will become apparent, Bourdieu also (claims to) allow for individual agency within externally influenced habitus.

In his development of the concept of *field*, Bourdieu sometimes uses the metaphor of a sports game, with the caveat that unlike a sports game, "a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation, and it follows rules, or better, regularities, that are not explicit and codified."[68] The 'players' which make up such a field "are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning. Players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by way of a 'contract,' that the game is worth playing."[69] Field, as a concept, helps frame the structural and power relations that make up the social world, and helps us make

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[66] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology (The Chicago Workshop)," *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, (ed.) Loic J. D. Wacquant, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 96. The argument has been made by Bourdieu that such "notions as habitus, field, and capital can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation," and such a claim makes difficult any division of concepts for the didactic purpose of explanation. However, such a division must occur as a starting point for larger hermeneutic engagement with Bourdieu's corpus.
[67] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology (The Chicago Workshop)," 89-90.
[68] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 98.
[69] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 98, emphasis original.

sense of how individuals relate to one another, as well as to those structure and power relations. Bourdieu notes that in more analytic terms

> a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions.[70]

Fields, in a Bourdieusian sense, much like a baseball – or other sports – field, frame a series of objective positions for 'players.' These players can be either individuals or institutions, depending on the breadth of the field in question. Each position brings with it particular roles to fill, (the pitcher plays a different role to the backstop), and those roles allow access to particular influence (in the form of power or capital) upon the outcome of the game (the profits at stake in the field).

Field as a general concept has been applied to many specific areas by Bourdieu,[71] but each time the general concept plays off the loose metaphor of the game. This allows Bourdieu to identify the *external background* which surrounds individuals in any social-historical setting.[72] An

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[70] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 97, emphasis original.

[71] For intellectual and artistic fields, see Pierre Bourdieu, "Intellectual Field and Creative Project," in *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, (ed.) Michael F. D. Young, (London, UK: Collier-Macmillan, 1971), 161-88; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Philosophical Establishment," in *Philosophy in France Today*, (ed.). Alan Montefiore, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-8; Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed" in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randal Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29-73; Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1988), for classes and class lifestyle, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Milton Park, UK: Routledge Classics, 2010); Pierre Bourdieu, "What Makes a Social Class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups," *Berkley Journal of Sociology*, 32, (1987): 1-18, for cultural goods see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," *Poetics* 14, (April, 1985): 13-44, on religious fields see Pierre Bourdieu, "Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber's Sociology of Religion," in *Max Weber, Rationality, and Modernity*, (ed.) Sam Whimster and Scott Lash, (London, UK: Allen and Unwin, 2007), 119-36, on scientific fields see Pierre Bourdieu, "Scientific Field and Scientific Thought," *Comparative Study of Social Transformation, CSST Working Paper*. (Ann Arbour, MI: The University of Michigan, 1987); Pierre Bourdieu, "The Scholastic Point of View," *Cultural Anthropology*, 5, no. 4, (November, 1990): 380-91, on juridical field and the field of power, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field," *Hastings Journal of Law*, 38, (1987): 209-48, Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992*, (eds.) Patrick Champagne, Remi Lenoir, Franck Poupeau, and Marie-Christine Rivière, (trans.) David Fernbach, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014), for linguistic fields, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language," in *Language & Symbolic Power*, (ed.), John B. Thompson, (trans.), Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003): 43-65, etc.

[72] To be mirrored by the *internal background* represented by habitus.

individual can occupy many fields simultaneously, and can move between various fields across time. The more alien the field, the more difficult it is likely to be for the 'new player' to adapt to the 'rules of the game.' Bourdieu argues that

> [b]ecause native membership in a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the 'upcoming' future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems sensible … Indeed, one only has to suspend the commitment to the game that is implied in the feel for the game in order to reduce the world, and the actions performed in it, to absurdity, and to bring up questions about the meaning of the world and existence which people never ask when they are caught up in the game.[73]

Fields are thus unquestioned, or 'background' elements of social structure, with the rules, roles, and profits operating out of assumption.

Here again we see the caveat that Bourdieu notes regarding the metaphor of a game, as in a game the field is "clearly seen for what it is, an arbitrary social construct, an artefact whose arbitrariness and artificiality are underlined by everything that defines its autonomy – explicit and specific rules, strictly delimited and extra-ordinary time and space."[74] Entry into these play-spaces often involve conscious contracts or agreements regarding fair play – often enforced by referees.[75] By contrast,

> in the social fields, which are the products of a long, slow process of autonomization, and are therefore, so to speak, games 'in themselves' and not 'for themselves', one does not embark on the game by a conscious act, one is born into the game, with the game … investment is made more total and unconditional by the fact that it is unaware of what it is.[76]

Being born into these fields allows "various fields [to] provide themselves with agents equipped with the *habitus* needed to make them work," thus one's habitus "is to the learning of a game very much as the acquisition of the mother tongue is to the learning of a foreign language."[77] Much like

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[73] Pierre Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021): 66-67.
[74] Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," 67.
[75] Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992*, 93-94. Bourdieu uses chess as an example to help distinguish the rules which pre-exist and are explicitly agreed upon in games, and the immanent rules of a field, stating that "The game goes not contain is whole truth within itself. A field is a game that is played according to regularities that are its rules, but in which play can also involved transforming these rules or regularities," (94) making it more socially and historically fluid than a game in any given moment.
[76] Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," 67.
[77] Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," 67, emphasis original.

with the "already constituted disposition [which] confronts a[n] [alien] language … in the form of grammar, rules and exercises, expressly taught by institutions expressly designed" to allow an individual to "think *in* (rather than with) the language."[78] As noted above, an individual can move between fields, but just like with languages, the more alien the grammar of the new given social space, the more explicit the field and its positions and economies of power would seem, and likewise the more difficult it would likely be to adapt to a place where these rules become part of the external background for an individual. The anthropological influence in Bourdieu's work is obvious here from his fieldwork in Algeria in the 1960s, and one only needs to think of visiting another country for the first time and experiencing foreign cultural practices (and feeling out-of-place) to understand the value of Bourdieu's concept of field.

While fields represent a framework for the aforementioned 'external background' of the social world, they *also* represent *more than* simply a collection of tacit knowledges. Describing the 'literary field,' Bourdieu notes that it is

> neither a vague social background nor even a milieu *artistique* like a universe of personal relations between artists and writers …. It is a veritable social universe where, in accordance with its particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital and where relations of force of a particular type are exerted. This universe is the place of entirely specific struggles, notably concerning the question of knowing who is part of the universe, who is a real writer and who is not. The important fact, for the interpretation of works, is that this autonomous social universe functions somewhat like a *prism* which refracts every external determination: demographic, economic or political events are always retranslated according to the specific logic of the field, and it is by this intermediary that they act on the logic of the development of works.[79]

The potential difficulty of moving between fields is brought centerstage when considering fields as different 'social universes.' Despite this language, Bourdieu doesn't disconnect the overriding impact that the various political and economic structures which make up a given social-historical period or location have, noting that despite being autonomous in some ways, the prismatic relationship between a given field and the wider social world necessarily intertwines the two. Further to this, the "question of the limits of the field is a very difficult one, if only because it is

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[78] Bourdieu, "Belief and the Body," 67, emphasis original.
[79] Pierre Bourdieu, "Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randal Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 163-64, emphasis original.

always at stake in the field itself and therefore admits of no *a priori* answer."[80] The field, unlike the game, is a 'field of struggles' framed by unclear, constantly debated 'barriers to entry,' and internally challengeable rules and roles.[81]

It has already been hinted at already that the individuals who fill these roles, play these parts, and are born into these fields, have an important role to play both of their own agentive accord, and in the reproduction (and possible reformulating) of the field. To make sense of the individual in his account, Bourdieu introduced the concept of *habitus*.

Conceptualized to account for the internalization of social circumstances, habitus is a concept which entails the internalized dispositions an individual carries with them which

> Incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any 'rule'. The dispositions which constitute the habitus are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable.[82]

These dispositions towards action, allow one to develop habits which interact with the social world. They are inculcated from the rules, goals, and media of power that make up the field(s) one inhabits. The living-out of life creates a temporal space within which these rules, goals, and media are internalized as legitimate and desirable. These *inculcations* create *internal structures* mirroring external structures, which are *durable*, insofar as they do not immediately dissolve when one moves from their native field of inculcation to an alien field, and are *generative* insofar as they create practices which reproduce the field of their origin. These dispositions are also *transposable*, both in the sense that they can be applied on an ad hoc basis to alien fields to challenge the rules, goals, or media of power which make up that field. In the process of such challenges (and encounters with) alien fields, the processes of inculcation continue, allowing an individual to always represent more than their social-historical origin, while carrying that origin with them throughout their lives in different dispositional capacities. Habitus thus represents

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures … which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without

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[80] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 100, emphasis original.
[81] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 100-101.
[82] John B. Thompson, (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," in *Language & Symbolic Power*, (ed.), John B. Thompson, (trans.), Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 12.

> presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.[83]

These dispositions represent an 'internal background' which functions – much like the rules of a field *contra* the rules of a game – immanently to the individual without necessary rationalization or obedience to external rules.

With the concept of habitus, Bourdieu can account for human action in a manner which doesn't require constant external rationalization, noting that

> Action guided by a 'feel for the game' has all the appearances of the rational action that an impartial observer … would deduce. And yet it is not based on reason. You need only think of the impulsive decision made by the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that is has nothing in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice: time is limited, information is restricted, etc. And yet agents *do* do, much more often than if they were behaving randomly, 'the only thing to do'.[84]

This seemingly rational acting occurs because, following intuitions which are the product of a "lasting exposure to conditions similar to those in which they are placed, they anticipate the necessity immanent in the way of the world."[85] The individual, through their habitus, can act in a pre-rational (or perhaps post-rational, depending on the manner of inculcation – explicit education or implicit adoption) manner which is *not* random.

While habitus, as a concept, accounts for the pre-rational, pre-conscious action of individuals, Bourdieu argues that it is

> never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the *habitus* performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective. But these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities,

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[83] Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021): 53.
[84] Pierre Bourdieu, "Fieldwork in Philosophy," 11, emphasis original.
[85] Bourdieu, "Fieldwork in Philosophy," 11.

> immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, 'upcoming' future.[86]

Even rational calculation, for Bourdieu, is grounded on pre-rational presents aimed at possible futures. The practical work acts as "a system of cognitive and motivating structures," as a "world of already realized ends – procedures to follow, paths to take – and of objects endowed with a 'permanent teleological character'."[87] The difference then between rational calculation and dispositional action is not the telos, it is the *working through of the connecting points between the present and the aimed-at future*.

As noted above, an individual's habitus is functionally connected to the social structures of the field(s) they inhabit, both insofar as the habitus develops, and as the habitus reinforced or challenges the field in question. Habitus thus

> entertains with the social world which has produced it a real ontological complicity, the source of cognition without consciousness, intentionality without intention, and a practical mastery of the world's regularities which allows one to anticipate the future without needing to posit it as such.[88]

While this may seem deterministic, Bourdieu clarifies that habitus is "not the fate that some people read into it."[89] Rather, "[b]eing the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal!"[90] Despite this space for human agency, Bourdieu also recognizes that "there is a probability, inscribed in the social destiny associated with definite social conditions, that experiences will confirm habitus, because most people are statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus,"[91] especially individuals who never leave their native fields.

Much like the relation between field and habitus, it is necessary to add Bourdieu's concept of capital into the conceptual weave, both to socially and historically contextualize particular

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[86] Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," 53, emphasis original.
[87] Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," 53.
[88] Bourdieu, "Fieldwork in Philosophy," 11-12.
[89] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 133.
[90] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 133.
[91] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 133.

capitals – as "*capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field*"[92] – and to make sense of how dispositions toward particular desires and tastes function in relation to different capitals.

7.2.(c) Capital

Expanding from Marx's economic account of capital, Bourdieu diversifies the range of possible applications for the concept. Capital

> confers a power over the field, over the materialized or embodied instruments of production or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field, and over the regularities and rules which define the ordinary functioning of the field, and thereby over the profits engendered in it.[93]

These powers and profits are not, however, always economic, as different fields give priority to different forms of capital "which [are] current, as a power or stake, in that field,"[94] and are "always the site[s] of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it."[95] These forms of capital are principally

> Economic capital (in its different kinds), cultural capital and social capital, as well as symbolic capital, commonly called prestige, reputation, fame, etc., which is the form assumed by these different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate.[96]

Economic capital is objective in the form of money or "material properties."[97] Cultural capital could also be called 'informational capital' insofar as it relates to cultural knowledge and exists "in three forms, embodied, objectified, or institutionalized."[98] This cultural capital is often measured by one's "level of education (measured in terms of qualifications obtained),"[99] but can also be inherited from social origin.[100] *Institutionalized* cultural capital is that supported by

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[92] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 101, emphasis original.
[93] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 101.
[94] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'," in *Language & Symbolic Power*, (ed.), John B. Thompson, (trans.), Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 230.
[95] Thompson, (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," 14.
[96] Bourdieu, "Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'," 230.
[97] Bourdieu, "Social Space and the Genesis of 'Classes'," 230.
[98] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 119.
[99] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language," in *Language & Symbolic Power*, (ed.), John B. Thompson, (trans.), Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 61.
[100] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2010), 5.

education systems with clearly distinguished levels of achievement (degrees of different levels and associated cultural capital), *objectified* cultural capital could be exemplified by works of art and other cultural objects,[101] and *embodied* cultural capital could be represented by actions (in the form of dress, linguistic affectation, aesthetic taste, 'cultured opinion,' and questions of 'lifestyle').[102] Especially regarding aesthetic taste we see cultural capital embodied in individuals who develop and maintain – usually with explicit lack of concern for economic capital -

> The aesthetic disposition which tends to bracket off the nature and function of the object represented and to exclude any 'naïve' reaction—horror at the horrible, desire for the desirable, pious reverence for the sacred—along with all purely ethical responses, in or order to concentrate solely upon the mode of representation, the style.[103]

Cultural capital yields profits "in distinction, proportionate to the rarity of the means required to appropriate them, and a profit in legitimacy … which consists in the fact of feeling justified in being (what one is), being what it is right to be."[104] Bourdieu gives an example of this justification when distinguishing between the two extremes of aesthetic pleasure: "the *enjoyment* which accompanies aesthetic perception reduced to simple *aisthesis,* and the *delight* procured by scholarly savouring."[105] In such an example of taste we see the cultural capital of aesthetic perception, "which is acquired through education that may be diffuse or specific, conscious or unconscious, institutionalized or non-institutionalized,"[106] but remains a distinguisher of class and cultural station.

Social capital "is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relations of mutual acquaintance and recognition."[107] In short, *who* you know, and *how* you know them. The favours one can call in, the invitations one gets, all of these are influenced by social capital, as

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[101] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 225.
[102] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 5, 283-84. Bourdieu notes the close relationship between "cultural practices (or the corresponding opinions) to educational capital (measured by qualification)" (5).
[103] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 46. See also Pierre Bourdieu, "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.), Randal Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 215-37.
[104] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 225.
[105] Bourdieu, "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," 220, emphasis original.
[106] Bourdieu, "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," 217.
[107] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 119.

does marriage advantageous to social positioning.[108] Lastly, symbolic capital often takes the form of the immaterial in the form of honour, prestige, and recognition, often in ritualized form. Indeed, "[m]easured by the yardstick of monetary profit, the most sacred activities find themselves constituted negatively as symbolic, that is … as lacking concrete, material effect."[109] Despite this,

> Economic and symbolic capital are so inextricably intertwined that … [s]ymbolic capital is valid even in the market. A man may enhance his prestige by making a purchase at an exorbitant price, for the sake of his point of honour, just to 'show he could do it'; but he may also take pride in having managed to conclude a deal without laying out a penny in cash, either by mobilizing a number of guarantors, or, even better, by virtue of the credit and the capital of trust that stems from a reputation for honour as well as wealth.[110]

This exchange of one kind of capital – here symbolic in place of economic capital[111] – is possible in many ways between the various forms of capital Bourdieu lays out. While economic capital is often a prerequisite for other forms of capital, often providing "the conditions for freedom from economic necessity"[112] which allows for the development of aesthetic dispositions of cultural capital, the necessary socializing for the development of social capital, and perhaps the donations or funding of events for the development of symbolic capital. This 'currency exchange' can occur in different directions, as noted above with symbolic capital, but also with the drawing on friends in high places to acquire a job (social-to-economic capital), or the acquiring of a PhD to get a job (economic-to-cultural-to-economic capital), or the making of connections by attending academic conferences (cultural-to-social capital), etc.

Despite differing from the primarily economic approach of Marx, Bourdieu's debt to Marx is clear in both his deployment of economic concepts across a range of fields, as well as economic capital remaining the underlying means of translating between forms of capital.[113] Economic capital is often the 'universal reference point' on which any other exchange of capital draws.

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[108] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Work of Time," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 109.
[109] Pierre Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 117-18.
[110] Bourdieu, "Symbolic Capital," 119.
[111] Also demonstrated in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randall Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 276, fn. 44.
[112] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randall Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 68.
[113] Thompson, "Editor's Introduction," 30-31.

Bourdieu exemplifies this by the opposition between "ordinary entrepreneurs seeking immediate economic profit and cultural entrepreneurs struggling to accumulate specifically cultural capital, *albeit at the cost of temporarily renouncing economic profit*."[114] Beyond these four 'primary' capitals there are a range of capitals specific to given fields, such as linguistic, religious, and other forms of capital which often take the form of a combination of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. Looking at the modern capitalist state, Bourdieu's later work notes the

> emergence of a specific capital, *properly statist capital* … which allows the state to wield a power over the different fields and over the various forms of capital that circulate in them. This kind of *meta-capital* capable of exercising a power over other species of power, and particularly over their rate of exchange … defines the specific power of the state.[115]

In so doing we can see a theme in his concept of capital that parallels that in his concept of field – fluid borders which allow for individuals to exist simultaneously within multiple fields, or cultural products or acts of production or exchange to exist in relation to multiple forms of capital simultaneously. This claim is in keeping with Bourdieu's statement that the state "is not a bloc, it is field. … that is, a space structured according to oppositions linked to specific forms of capital with differing interests."[116] Seemingly contrary to the generality of this statist capital, it seems that it is merely another field-specific capital; it is the field, however, that has domination over other fields, rather than the capital which has domination over other capitals.

Bourdieu's concepts are general insofar as every social space can be defined by field(s), every individual by habitus, and every human interaction or striving by capital. This gives at least the appearance of useful tools for grounding social science by challenging overly deterministic and overly relativist accounts. This would seemingly make sense and be in keeping with Bourdieu's claims towards a public sociology which counters academic isolation without abandoning academic rigour. In the next section we will look at Bourdieu's claims regarding these things, and ask whether they stand, before moving on introducing the possibility of a MacIntyrean sociology which could function where Bourdieu's public sociology seems to fail.

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[114] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, (ed.) Randall Johnson, (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 83, emphasis added.
[115] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 114, emphasis original.
[116] Bourdieu, *On the State*, 20.

7.2.(d) 'Public' Sociology, Relativism, and Ungrounded Social Science

Bourdieu has long argued against positivist and functionalist themes, especially the false paradigm of sociology 'as a natural science,' which leads to a constricting of the field and the idea that Kuhnian revolutions are inherently bad, rather than sometimes necessary.[117] This tendency has led towards an attempt to mirror the natural sciences which has only led to an adoption of the problem of expertise identified by Weber, that of hyper-specialization.[118] One of the strengths of sociology in Bourdieu's eyes is the heuristic value of fuzzy concepts and flexible methodologies, constantly open to adaptation to the social space or time being examined.[119]

To push back against this positivist lens of sociology modelled after the natural sciences, Bourdieu makes clear that unlike any other science, sociology helps create the objects of their study,[120] and Bourdieu argues that as "social science progresses and its circulation widens, sociologists must expect more and more often to find, realized in their object, the social science of the past."[121] Further to this is the problem of human normativity, which is not frequently questioned within the natural sciences:[122]

> the sociologist more stringently bent on description will always be suspected of prescription or proscription. In ordinary existence, one rarely speaks of what is without stating in addition that it is conforming, proper or contrary to the nature of things, normal or abnormal, permitted or forbidden, blessed or cursed.[123]

This, or course, is the case of the sociologist dedicated to mere description. Many are more consciously, for good or ill, dedicated to some kind of normative statement. This common integration of normative consideration is an issue for some. Indeed, responding to some critiques

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[117] Pierre Bourdieu, "Landmarks," in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, (trans.) Matthew Adamson, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 36-38.
[118] Bourdieu, "Landmarks," 39.
[119] Bourdieu, "Landmarks," 40.
[120] Pierre Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, (trans.) Matthew Adamson, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 181-82. While it could be argued that the Observer Effect in physics creates a parallel problem in the natural sciences, the physicist only *potentially* impacts an already extant phenomenon by virtue of observing it, whereas the sociologist is a *contributing agent* to the phenomenon being observed *even prior to observation*.
[121] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 182.
[122] A physicist might have to consider the military applications of his work, or a biologist the impact of his work on the natural world, but these concerns are adjacent to the work itself. Whereas the sociologist's work is inherently normative by virtue of being socially embedded in its object of study.
[123] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 182.

of *The Impossible Science*,[124] Jonathan Turner argues that to counter the widening gap between the theory and practice of, as well as applicability of, sociology, it must seek to model itself as a natural science,[125] disconnecting itself from ideological influence and political activism by moving in a direction opposite of 'public sociology,' and instead developing and maintaining a significant level of insulation from the lay public.[126]

Bourdieu parallels the discourse of science with the logic of a trial and identifies the alienating problematics that come from this. He notes that science often (re)confirms "the relation that the most dispossessed entertain with scholarly culture," with it being "(mis)construed either as an underhanded way of condemning the 'people' to ignorance or, *a contrario*, as a veiled manner of rehabilitating or celebrating cultural privation."[127] This appearance encourages a simmering distrust for the academic world among layfolk, especially when this academic field appears to take the side of authority, and carries with it by virtue of this all the problems of that authority through some form of complicity. The real or perceived power to predict through scientific work exerts "an inevitable political efficacy," regardless of the intent of the scientist, as that authority comes to see the scientist as imbued "with the power to make people see and believe" in some manner.[128] The social scientist thus is viewed as a tool of authority by *both* authorities, *and* the layfolk who see them as manipulative agents of that authority.

Despite this apparently dismal state, Bourdieu maintains hope for the capacity of sociology to challenge the authorities – whether academic or political – and their assumptions about the world, noting that the putting forward of new ideas, "however negligible they may be in themselves, suffice to transform the product of these [social] mechanisms in accordance with our wishes."[129] As noted previously, the predictability of social phenomena is much less than many – both inside and outside academia – believe or would have it be.[130] Despite this, Bourdieu seems to

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[124] Stephen P. Turner and Jonathan H. Turner, *The Impossible Science, An Institutional Analysis of American Sociology*, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1990).
[125] Jonathan Turner, "Further Reflections on Sociology as 'The Impossible Science'," *Social Epistemology*, 8, no. 1, (1994): 35-36.
[126] Turner, "Further Reflections on Sociology as 'The Impossible Science'," 37.
[127] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 182, emphasis original.
[128] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 182.
[129] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 183.
[130] For the problematics of economic determinism, see Alasdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL:

have hope that the incomplete and imperfect impact of social science prediction can be a tool for good:

> Given that knowledge of the mechanisms at work allows us … to determine the conditions and the means of an action aimed at mastering them, the rejection of sociologism, which turns probability into destiny, is always justified. And social movements of liberation are there to prove that a modicum of utopianism, that magical negation of the real that is elsewhere labelled neurotic, may even contribute to producing the political conditions of the practical negation of the realistic view of things. But, more importantly, knowledge exerts in itself an effect – which seems to me to be liberating.[131]

Here Bourdieu lays out a series of interesting claims. First, that some modicum of control of social circumstances is possible through sociological knowledge acquisition; second, that deterministic views of this are fallacious and ought to be rejected; third, that a modicum of utopianism is necessary for overcoming the real of the moment in favour of some new social or political conditions, and that the epistemic definition of the situation has an impact on that process (implying the effect sociologists might have upon the social world by virtue of their work).

7.2.(e) Bourdieu's Claims Through MacIntyre's Eyes

Interestingly, many of these points parallel positions held by MacIntyre. MacIntyre's rejection of what Bourdieu calls 'sociologism' is clear in many of his works.[132] This concern over the "dream which still haunts and informs the human sciences," that "dream of mechanical explanation,"[133] is one *seemingly* shared by both Bourdieu and MacIntyre.

However, regarding the first and third points put forward by Bourdieu, it seems that he would fall into the former of two camps which MacIntyre identified as developing in response to realization of the incapacity for total mechanistic control through the social sciences. The first could be framed as the '*not there yet*' camp, exemplified by

> those who hold that the limited and particularising nature of the human sciences at the moment merely reflects a temporary phase in their development. To such sociologists as Lundberg or Lazarfeld, the only misleading feature of the attempt to

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Haymarket Books, 2009); for the problems sociological prediction, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*.

[131] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 183.

[132] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 145-62.

[133] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 145.

> assimilate the human sciences to physics is that expectations were pitched too high too soon. The human sciences still await their Newton. We continue to collect data and hope.[134]

This camp could arguably be populated by many quantitative methodologists and statisticians. Methods, it is important to note, that Bourdieu makes extensive use of.[135] Representing another possible response to the rejection (or abandonment) of mechanistic social determinism is the latter of the two camps, perhaps best titled as the '*never will be there*' camp:

> This is the doctrine that the limited and particularising nature of the human sciences … is due not to the slowness of our progress nor to the fact that we searched for the wrong sort of general theory, but to the fact that the concept of any general theory or overall understanding of society is nonsensical.[136]

Many postmodern and poststructuralist theorists fall into this camp,[137] and this is certainly not the camp one could easily fit Bourdieu given positions regarding public sociology and the liberatory nature of the development of sociological knowledge.

The third point Bourdieu puts forward, regarding the interplay between utopianism and the liberatory nature of knowledge creation is an interesting one to bring into conversation with MacIntyre, given his claims about the importance of a 'utopianism of the present.'[138] MacIntyre's conception of utopianism is necessarily presentist and thus inherently opposed to the mechanistic social science approaches, and better positioned to avoid such deterministic elements from seeping in unseen. Politics and science based on a liberal, 'civil society' conception of the social and historical realms are inherently reductionist, individualist, and divorce theory from practice.[139] This politics lies in the background of Bourdieu's so-called liberatory approach to theory, and MacIntyre actually directly critiques Bourdieu (and other sociologists) who relate "theory

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[134] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 149.
[135] Thompson, (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," 31.
[136] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 149.
[137] That poststructuralist thought like that of Foucault takes a problematic 'view from nowhere' which requires an unspoken general theory as the basis for a rejection of general theory is an important point to note, but not central to the current work. For more on this see and the 'cryptonormative' position of many in this camp, see Paul Rabinow, "Introduction," in *The Foucault Reader*, (ed.) Paul Rabinow, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 12-13, 23-27; Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problemizations: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader*, (ed.) Paul Rabinow, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 381-390; Jürgen Habermas, "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, (trans.) Frederick Lawrence, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 266-292.
[138] Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary," in *Virtue and Politics*, (ed.) Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 16-17.
[139] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 226, 228-29.

primarily to the practice of the scientific enquirer, that is, [to] the theorist,"[140] and this raises a range of problems for research, social critique, and education.[141] Further to this, the focus on the impact of knowledge on the social world which Bourdieu puts forward appears very Gadamerian, and while it is undebatable that the framing of knowledge necessarily impacts the wider social world, we have to remember MacIntyre's contention that Gadamer offers a great deal to the study and framing of intellectual and moral traditions, but only that which remains grounded and practical – that which comes from Aristotle – does he draw from. The Heideggerian elements which often lead to ungrounded epistemologies unconcerned with practical philosophical concerns are a failure of Gadamer in MacIntyre's eyes.[142]

Returning to Bourdieu, he certainly seems to follow in some ways a Gadamerian direction when it comes to the subjectivity and prejudice of individual social scientists, but with the claim that theoretical engagement offers a way out of this:

> it is only on condition of grasping the game as such, with the stakes, rules or regularities that are its own … that the intellectual can, simultaneously, disentangle herself from it in and through the distance constitutive of theoretical representation, and discover herself engaged in it, located at a definite place, and endowed with a definite and defining stakes and investments. No matter what its scientific pretentions, objectivation is bound to remain partial, and thus false, as long as it ignores and refuses to acknowledge the point of view from which it is enunciated, and therefore the game in its totality.[143]

Objectivity as an automatic scientific phenomenon is out of the question for Bourdieu, but movement towards objectification is possible for him once the academic becomes aware of their subjective positionality. Again, this seems to support my placing Bourdieu into the 'not there yet' camp.

Moving from this potentially problematic position of Bourdieu's, we can see that he maintains some positivist elements in his faith in the scientific method. He argues that

> Science is strengthened every time we strengthen scientific critique, that is, whenever we reinforce the scientific quality of the weapons at hand and,

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[140] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 230.
[141] MacIntyre, "The *Theses on Feuerbach*," 229-31.
[142] Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 265.
[143] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 183-84.

> inseparably, the imperative to use the weapons of science, and them alone, in order to triumph in matters scientific.[144]

MacIntyre would agree with the first point, but not necessarily the second. Indeed, Bourdieu's attempt to simultaneously socially and politically position the scientist, and disconnect them from social or political deployment of their science, may seem contradictory. These positivist elements continue – again in a manner which MacIntyre would not necessarily disagree with given his measured critical engagement with C.S. Pierce and Karl Popper[145] – when Bourdieu claims that he sees elements of positivism as not only salvageable, but necessary for functioning academic development.

Again, in a manner not dissimilar to MacIntyre, Bourdieu accepts the possibility of "transhistoric social products (that is, products relatively independent of their social conditions of product)."[146] These include

> such as scientific truths [as] may arise out of the historicity of a particular social configuration … [and] social science can account for the paradoxical progress of a reason that is thoroughly historical and yet irreducible to history: if there is a truth, it is that truth is a stake of struggles.[147]

Like MacIntyre, theoretical truth is a contested phenomenon for Bourdieu, but one which need not be trapped in a hard-relativist position of isolation.

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[144] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 184.
[145] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 162. MacIntyre clearly notes that 'positivism is not the enemy' despite its problems. For his critiques of Popper, see: MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150-53; MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 51; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Recent Political Thought," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 330-31. For his support for the importance of falsifiability in academic pursuits, see: Alasdair MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, (ed.) Kelvin Knight, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 188; MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori, 259; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19-23; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70; MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues," 163, 173; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: a Thomistic Reading of Fides et Ratio," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 187-88; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Dilemmas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 95-96; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 198.
[146] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 185.
[147] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 185.

Despite this theoretical spiritedness, Bourdieu remains concerned with the above noted lack of communicability between academia and non-academics, fearing that "those who are most dispossessed scientifically … can always find in political denunciation a facile substitute for scientific critique."[148] This, combined with the real or apparent representation of authority taken on by the academic dangerously positions sociology such that its existence as

> a scientific discipline is continually threatened. The structural vulnerability that stems from the possibility of skirting scientific requirements by playing the game of politicization is such that it has nearly as much to fear from those powers that expect too much from it as from those that want its disappearance.[149]

It is perhaps because of this widening gap of understanding between the academic and layperson that Bourdieu not only explicitly argues that sociology ought not get involved in legislation or social manipulation,[150] but that sociology ought to become opened in a reflexive manner; that public sociology be a goal of the academy.

In addition to his apparent desire to bridge the communication and trust gaps between academics and non-academics, Bourdieu identifies the danger of political undertakings by social scientists, noting that it is the fate of such presumptuous undertakings

> to remind us that the magical ambition of transforming the social world without knowledge of its inner functioning takes the risk of substituting, for the 'inert violence' of the mechanisms that pretentious ignorance has destroyed, another violence, sometimes even more inhumane.[151]

This fear of the consequences of arrogance about the predictability and possibility to control society seems ironic, however, given the enlightening role sociology plays in the mind of Bourdieu, who points out that "the realities that the sociologist brings to light are not invisible, or are only so in the sense that they 'stare you in the face'," [152] and that sociology "unveils the *self-deception,* the collectively entertained and encouraged lying to oneself which, in every society, is at the foundation of the most sacred values and, therefore, of all social existence."[153] We should expect from such a discipline "that it [should] push back the temptation of magic, that *hubris* of

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[148] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 185.
[149] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 185.
[150] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 186.
[151] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 188-89.
[152] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 187.
[153] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 188, emphasis original.

ignorance ignorant of itself which, having been expelled from our relation to the natural realm, survives in our relation to the social world."[154]

Despite his critiques of mechanistic, deterministic, and politically manipulative uses and approaches to the social sciences – positions largely shared with MacIntyre – Bourdieu seems to maintain a range of Enlightenment views of the social sciences. There remains a Weberian void between the discipline, which ought to be self-critical, as well as socially knowledgeable in a manner which can lead to political improvement, and the realm outside the discipline. Bourdieu argues *simultaneously* that the sociologist ought not to get involved with social and political fields (despite already being inherently embedded in them) *and* ought to seek out a *more public* sociology.

7.2.(f) Can MacIntyre Help Overcome the Problematics of Bourdieu's Concepts?

In addition to the above contradictions, we can identify problematics with the core concepts which Bourdieu presents to ground such claims. I, and MacIntyre, agree with Bourdieu regarding the necessarily debated and fuzzy boundaries – both within a discipline, and within concepts within a discipline.[155] As such, the flexibility of his concept of field is useful in a range of social spaces, and heuristically effective in a range of possible fieldwork and initial conceptual development based upon primary data collection. I would, however, argue that MacIntyre's differentiated concepts of tradition, craft, and practice, help account for the distinction – historically, epistemically, and socially – between different levels of social and epistemic engagement more effectively than Bourdieu's concept of field.

The 'fuzziness' of Bourdieu's account of field gives it the flexibility to cover both the specific and the general – for instance, both a specific household and an entire cultural group – but this fuzziness seems to overly focus on the similarities rather than the differences between spaces of human interaction across levels of abstraction. MacIntyre, on the other hand, while maintaining a certain level of heuristically necessary fuzziness (when a tradition-bound craft becomes a

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[154] Bourdieu, "Lecture on the Lecture," 188, emphasis original.
[155] Jonathan Turner, "Further Reflections on Sociology as 'The Impossible Science'," 36. A fuzziness which is critiqued by some, like Jonathan Turner, for its contribution to sociology becoming a "disintegrated discipline in which sociologists no longer see themselves as members of a common community … in which they use widely varying and contradictory discursive forms, in which they do not agree on what constitutes competent work."

tradition-independent practice is not always a clear line to cross for example), more clearly ties concepts to specific levels of social-historical abstraction, to help differentiate for example between the social-historical phenomenon of the game of chess and the social-historical phenomenon of Thomistic-Aristotelianism. While there are shared elements across these levels of abstraction (virtues, vices, and living histories for example), there are also important distinctions (a boardgame does not have to come to terms with, or resist the domination of, *institutions* in the same way an academic or philosophic tradition of thought must, for instance). Further to this, Bourdieu's concept of field seems to treat all human activities as having the same ontological status. At a profoundly abstract level this may not seem problematic, but when one focuses in further, it is easy to realize the potential reductionism in this if one sought to analyze the playing of an instrument in the same manner as the living out of a friendship or the proceeding of a political movement. As noted above, while the playing of the violin, being someone's friend, and being a member a political movement all may have virtues and vices accorded to each – something MacIntyre allows for – the form of virtues, the questions being asked within each social-historical phenomenon, the types of actions which are understood as expected or allowable, the teloi towards which one aims, and historical manner in which all of these expectations and goals are framed may radically differ – something which Bourdieu does not allow for. Indeed, Bourdieu's concept of field seems constraining rather than liberating, as it 'works' in the same way that a spray-can of paint 'works' in covering an entire canvas. But it fails in the same way that that same spray-can cannot highlight edges or draw lines without the aid of brushes and other painting equipment. Likewise, Bourdieu's conceptual tool is useful, but requires a range of other tools to give a fuller account of the canvas of social-historical life – tools which I argue MacIntyre can help provide.

Bourdieu's differentiation and expansion of Marx's capital is another useful theoretical development, and one which MacIntyre could perhaps learn from. While MacIntyre is aware of the impact and continued importance of the economic sphere, he does not have the conceptual toolset offered by Bourdieu's account of capital. Despite this, MacIntyre is aware of a range of other influences upon power, status, and social-political location. Indeed, MacIntyre would surely be wary of any economic determinism, and perhaps critique – in a similar manner to *field* – the broad-brush application of capital as a central tool of analysis to any or all social-historical goals and circumstances. While Bourdieu at least distinguishes between different types of – and interwoven types of – capital, it is important to not lose touch with the necessary value of metaphor

to access these different areas and *means of intelligible comparison and communication between them*. Bourdieu, who argues that there is a possibility of 'exchange' of different 'currencies' – economic capital for social capital, etc. – is not always clear as to *how* this works. Capital as a metaphor seems to be not fully applicable. For instance, the question of 'exchange rate' between the forms of capital which Bourdieu lists doesn't fully make sense, given that no amount of economic capital can be exchanged for any *particular* amount of symbolic capital with certainty. Likewise, one cannot 'give away' symbolic capital for economic capital – indeed, economic capital seems the *only* form of capital which is *lost* in exchange. Perhaps a more MacIntyrean metaphor of *translation* might be useful here to help access elements of social-historical practice which the Bourdieusian metaphor of *economic exchange* fails to fully account for? While the economic metaphor provided by Bourdieu is useful, especially in a capitalist world such as ours, it runs the risk of justifying the dominant economic-political paradigm by simultaneously describing and prescribing a way of viewing the world. MacIntyre, on the other hand, recognizes the impact of economics while challenging the current capitalist regime both explicitly and implicitly in the form of his conceptual development and deployment.

On the point of habitus I see another major issue which I think MacIntyre could help with. While it has been pointed out above that Bourdieu's positions on the social sciences are somewhat contradictory, perhaps leading to an ungrounded understanding of what sociology ought to be, it is perhaps more important to identify the failures of the central grounding concept which ties the individual to the social for Bourdieu. His concept of habitus, seems insufficient to tie the individual and the social together, thus necessitating an atomized individual, ungrounded by any social-historical circumstance or worldview. This undermines any larger claims Bourdieu makes about connecting social-historical phenomena such as particular disciplines, or academia more widely, to the individuals who inhabit, make-up, and catalyze change within these spaces. While Bourdieu historically and socially locates the individual through the inculcation of the structural standards which pre-exist them and allows for the flexibility of explanation of individual reactions, even his concept doesn't leave space for conscious reflection. This flies in the face of his repeated directing of sociology and sociologists to a more reflexive engagement with their work, their discipline, and their social spaces: how can Bourdieu make the normative claim that a discipline, and those who make it up, ought to be more reflexive in their consideration of the world and their movement through it if he *cannot ground that claim in an account of the possibility of human reflexivity*?

To elaborate, habitus is necessarily *preconscious*.[156] As with the above example of the tennis player who doesn't need to think, but merely acts, by virtue of their habitus, habitus adopts practices according to the logic of whatever field an individual finds themselves in, and

> all the practices and products of a given agent are objectively harmonized among themselves, *without any deliberate pursuit of coherence*, and objectively orchestrated, *without any conscious concertation*, with those of all members of the same class. The habitus continuously generates … systematic transpositions required by the particular conditions in which the habitus is 'put into practice.'[157]

As with the distinction between a game proper, and a field, the explicit and conscious engagement with rules in the former is absent in the latter,[158] and likewise habitus – inculcated from a range of fields – does not entail conscious reflection, rather a series of habits which allow for "not a consciousness that explicitly posits its ends, nor an unconscious mechanism, but a feel for the game … a practical sense [guided by] a habitus, by dispositions to play not by the rules, but by the implicit regularities of a game in which one has been immersed since early childhood."[159] While Bourdieu has occasionally claimed that the practices formulated and embodied through one's habitus fall somewhere in a middle-ground between conscious and unconscious action, he has never properly explained this and seemingly avoids the question of conscious reflection and its impact upon one's habits, attempting to avoid determinism without actually grounding his claims.[160]

As a concept which conditions and directs one's perceptions,[161] it seems problematic, especially given Bourdieu's focus on reflexivity, that such perceptions cannot be turned in upon one's own habitus to consciously engage with its elements, even if only temporarily or situationally. I argue habitus leaves a gap in both the grounding of Bourdieu's wider account of sociology, and his account of human action and agency. While there are certainly parts of any individual's unconscious background – by whatever name we wish to call it – which at any given time they cannot consciously access, Bourdieu seems to problematically take this further. Bourdieu

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[156] Thompson, (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," 12.
[157] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 168, emphasis added.
[158] Bourdieu, *On the State*, 94.
[159] Bourdieu, *On the State*, 241.
[160] Bourdieu, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology," 136-37; 139-40. See also Kruger, "MacIntyre & Habermas," 33, fn. 88.
[161] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 166-67, see especially Figure 8.

seems to essentially leave an individual's background inaccessible by virtue of the theoretical construction of habitus, while simultaneously centering the importance of human agency and capacity for reflection within his work. This impacts not only sociological analysis of the interplay between the individual and the social, but larger arguments put forward by Bourdieu: a reflexive sociology simply cannot be grounded on an essential theory of the background which precludes reflexivity. While Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps distinguish important elements of the creation, recreation, and application of an individual's background (through such distinguishing terms as 'disposition,' 'inculcation,' 'durability,' 'generativity,' 'transposability,' and the 'structured structuring of structuring structures'[162]), it does not explain *how* the phenomenon of reflection interacts with this background. MacIntyre's conception of *prereflective backgrounds*, elaborated in Chapter 2, §2.8, is better positioned to address this concern. While MacIntyre does distinguish the elements Bourdieu does, and could draw from these to expand his idea, he allows for an essential feature which enables the individual to – as an agentive being – connect with the social not only through direct interaction in the first-person, but through indirect reflection through the third-person. This potential for reflection also allows for an explanation of how individuals can relate to one another in the third-person in a way which Bourdieu's concept of habitus does not explicate. Indeed, by Bourdieu's account individuals relate to each other only through a structural or economic sense (one person recognizing the role another fills in a given field, or by recognizing the shared or divergent forms of capital – and means of seeking it – being sought by the other). MacIntyre on the other hand provides the – at least nascent – tools for accounting for how humans can relate to one another *qua* human beings, *as well as* individuals filling roles, or seeking particular goods (including *non-economic* goods).

Having laid out some of the core concepts which Bourdieu has brought into common use within sociology across the world, and presented some initial critiques which MacIntyre might bring to Bourdieu – as well as some elements of Bourdieu which MacIntyre could make use of if proceeding dialogically – it make sense at this point to turn to the wider question of what role MacIntyre might play in challenging the broader Bourdieusian approach of public sociology to ground future sociological work.

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[162] Thompson, (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," 12-13; Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," 53.

7.3 What Might a More MacIntyrean Sociology Look Like?

Bourdieu argues that many turned "towards the social sciences, to conceive the ambition of reconciling theoretical and practical intentions, bringing together the scientific and ethical or political vocation … in a humbler and more responsible way of performing their task as researchers, a kind of militant craftmanship, as remote from pure science as from exemplary prophecy."[163] Despite this, he argues that this connection between the theoretical and practical, or ethical and scientific, is inherently problematic, noting that the sociology of science and other fields which take science as their objects are fields which have "ill-defined frontiers," and are "criss-crossed by controversies and conflicts which, surprisingly, illustrate in an exemplary way the best analyses of scientific controversies put forward by the sociologists of science."[164] Contrary to this I want to present a more 'MacIntyrean sociology,' which would necessarily tie practical, theoretical, ethical, and scientific concerns to a wider tradition which itself represents the fusing of previous traditional approaches.

Bourdieu is aware – like MacIntyre – of the strength offered by the 'ill-defined' borders which allows for both internal and external descriptions and critiques of various sciences and their approaches. This is in keeping with MacIntyre's account that only by being fluent in the 'two first languages' of two (or more) traditions can one properly translate between the idioms of either,[165] and that such tradition(s) must necessarily be capable of occasionally reformulating their teloi.[166] This MacIntyrean account, with an eye to both Kuhnian scientific revolutions and Popperian scientific standards of falsification, remains practical however, as to live a

> practically well-ordered life is to embody the universal concepts which we comprehend and justify in those enquiries in the particularities of our individual lives. So the moral life is the life of embodied moral enquiry and those individuals who live out the moral life as farmers, or fishermen, or furniture makers embody more or less adequately in those lives, devoted in key part to their own crafts, what

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[163] Pierre Bourdieu, "Preface," in *The Logic of Practice*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2021), 1-2.
[164] Pierre Bourdieu, "The State of the Question," in *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, (trans.) Richard Nice, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 7.
[165] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 113-14; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 374.
[166] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 149-50.

> may often not be recognized as a theory, the product of the theorist's very different craft, but which *nevertheless is one*.[167]

This living-out, often unconsciously, of theoretical embodiments may seem at first to fall into a category parallel to habitus but given that MacIntyre is conceptualizing these embodiments as theoretical there remains the possibility of such theories being reflected upon, whether by a particular practice or tradition, or by an individual. This allows for a grounding of sociology by tying the questions of practice and theory together in the living-out of individuals, despite which particular practice, craft, or tradition they are living-out. MacIntyre's position implies that individuals are agentive insofar as people can reflect upon the theories they are (often unconsciously) living-out in a way which allows for re-evaluations of not only the *theory in question* (say, whether *speed* ought to be considered a virtue in the playing of piano) but also the traditional or practical *framework of theories* (does, for instance, Western classical music better represent the goods of music than Japanese folk music?). This range of potential analysis, which is grounded in an essential human agency and potential for *reflection* and *re-evaluation*, is absent in Bourdieu.

So, what might MacIntyre offer sociology, and what might a more 'MacIntyrean sociology' look like? In addition to being better grounded in terms of accounting for individual agency as well as structural influence on the individual, I argue that MacIntyre's theoretical positioning is less contradictory than Bourdieu's, and will propose the advantages of a) viewing sociology as a tradition of inquiry, b) the elements of positivism which MacIntyre salvages, c) the historical and social specificity which MacIntyre's thought allows for without falling into a hard-relativist position, and d) the value MacIntyre might bring to empirical sociological work and research methods.

7.3.(a) Sociology as a Tradition of Inquiry

My first proposal of what MacIntyre might offer sociology as a discipline, specifically one trying to address some of the concerns rightly raised by Bourdieu and other 'public sociologists,' is the value in viewing sociology as a tradition. This concept is not one entirely alien to sociology,[168] but many who deploy the term do so to trace historical developments of thought *within sociology itself*.

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[167] MacIntyre, Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry, 80, emphasis added.
[168] See for instance Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, (New York, NY: Basic Book Publishers, 1966).

The Marxist tradition, the Feminist tradition, the Anticolonial tradition, etc. While tracing these theoretical frameworks historically as a means of identifying them within a wider discipline is of course useful, I think it is important to take a step back and recognize *the discipline itself* as a tradition, bordered by related traditions (such as anthropology, history, political science, and economics), with an contingent historical origin,[169] from which a series of debated teloi to aid in the direction of sociological work have risen, been rejected, been revisited, and been held to over time.[170]

There is a common (and problematic) approach to sociology where it is viewed as an interdisciplinary basket of leftovers from other disciplines (or traditions), from which whatever methods or concepts can be drawn to be made use of by the academic in the field for their own purposes. Sociology's relative youth compared to older disciplines like philosophy must certainly be conceded, and this might have lent itself to the discipline being viewed as an intersection of other disciplines rather than a discipline *in its own right* – even to the present day. Despite this, if we return to MacIntyre's account of traditions, we can see not only a descriptive aid in making sense of sociology as a historical phenomenon, but prescriptive aids in directing sociology forward:

> The development of a tradition is to be distinguished from that gradual transformation of beliefs to which every set of beliefs is exposed, both by its systematic and by its deliberate character. The very earliest stages in the development of anything worth calling a tradition of enquiry are thus already marked by theorizing. And the development of a tradition of enquiry is also to be distinguished from those abrupt general changes of belief which occur when, for example, a community undergoes a mass conversion, although such a conversion might be the originating point for such a tradition. A rational tradition's modes of continuity differ from those of the former, its ruptures from the latter. Some core of shared belief, constitutive of allegiance to the tradition, has to survive every rupture.[171]

Can we pick a relatively arbitrary starting point for sociology,[172] and honestly claim that some core of shared belief, constitutive of allegiance to the tradition, has survived every rupture to evolve going forward? The discipline has maintained its name over the past century, it has also continued

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[169] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354.
[170] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 355.
[171] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 355-56.
[172] See the Chapter 1 for a brief discussion about this, specifically fn. 1 and fn. 2.

to return to the classical texts and questions asked by them (however resistantly) to this day.[173] There have been ongoing debates in that time as to what sociology ought to be, with the sociologies of Parsons, C. Wright Mills, W.E.B. DuBois, Erving Goffman, and Donna J. Haraway, for example, being very different in terms of objects of inquiry and philosophy of social science.[174] One could look even further, tracing neo-Marxist thought, antihumanist social science, post-postmodernist thinking, etc. Of course, the further away one gets from shared theoretical language, the less communication one will see between these frameworks of thinking, but so long as the debates are continuing – so long as one sociologist looks at the work of another and feels a sympathy or revulsion towards it – I believe it fair to say that sociology *as a tradition* is ongoing. Were this not the case, neo-Marxists and antihumanists would simply not recognize the other as existing and pay no attention. Indeed, some move beyond sociology (despite perhaps starting within it) into more interdisciplinary and less historically and theoretically unified programs such as cultural studies.[175] While there is certainly instrumental, epistemic, and ethical value in interdisciplinary work, there is a pragmatic consideration of the potentially problematic impact such work might have on breaking down the barriers between disciplines. Left for a generation or two, such interdisciplinary academic movements will take on traditional trappings of their own, and merely reproduce the siloing the original interdisciplinary academics were concerned about, reducing the meaning of interdisciplinarity to the banal.

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[173] Even those who reject entirely the 'classics' for whatever reason still see reason to reject said texts and thus are dialectically engaging in an ongoing debate as to what makes up the 'classics' of the tradition, and by extension, what makes up the core questions, directions, and borders of the tradition itself.

[174] Although the similarities between them might be closer than first appears in some cases. For example, with Parsons and C. Wright Mills, who seemingly move in opposite directions regarding structure, but end in a similar location. See MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 154-57. Some of these points are elaborated in Alasdair MacIntyre, "C. Wright Mills," in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009), 241-45, with MacIntyre even saying that C. Wright Mills had become a "victim of the American dream." (244).

[175] While the theoretical openness may be seen as liberatory by some in such programs, there are theoretical and methodological problems which arise more commonly in such spaces than in more 'established' disciplines. This can be potentially evidenced by things like the 'Grievance Studies Affair,' where three academics attempted to publish bogus papers in cultural studies, gender and race studies, and sociology to demonstrate poor scientific process. An important point of note was that journals which *accepted* the bogus papers – *Gender, Place & Culture*; *Fat Studies*; *Sexuality & Culture*; and *Sex Roles* – all represented interdisciplinary fields, whereas the all the sociologically affiliated journals submitted to – *Sociological Theory*; *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*; *Sociology of Sport Journal*; *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*; and *Qualitative Inquiry* – rejected the bogus papers, demonstrating at least a solidity of tradition to recognize things that fall outside the pale. See "Grievance Studies Affair," *Wikipedia*, April 5th, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grievance_studies_affair, and Ian Reilly, "Public Deception as Ideological and Institutional Critique: On the Limits and Possibilities of Academic Hoaxing," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 45, no. 2 (July 2020): 265-85. https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2020v45n2a3667.

One of the pragmatic and prescriptive advantages of viewing sociology as a tradition is that it helps accept the fuzzy and debated boundaries of the discipline, while still recognizing them *as* boundaries – however ideal-typical – with individual histories, by reference to which disciplinary (and indeed, *inter*disciplinary) work can occur. The advantage of this is mostly epistemological for sociology, as a discipline which already shares many specific data collection, compilation, and analysis methods with sister disciplines. Given this, the worry about 'methodological leakage' is less concerning than the worry about the widespread dissolution of traditional borders such that 'sociology' ceases to mean anything. Arguing that "rational enquiry is itself *always tradition-dependent*,"[176] MacIntyre notes that

> [t]he best established theories … in contemporary natural science are not worthy of acceptance because they conform to some timeless set of canons for scientific theories, positivist or otherwise. Rather they are worthy of acceptance because of their superiority to their immediate predecessors, in respect of providing resources for the solution of certain types of problem and remedying certain types of incoherence, in light of some particular conception of what it would be to perfect theory in this or that area.[177]

Sociology, like other traditions, is to be vindicated by the historical "development of the standards by which incoherence and resourcelessness are judged."[178] This represents one of the descriptive advantages of viewing sociology as a tradition: its theoretical ability to trace historical continuity (and discontinuity) with the articulate framework is laid out by MacIntyre in a manner which allows sociology to better recognize its influences and its connection to other disciplines, while still recognizing itself as distinct discipline.[179]

While there are some like Wallerstein who seek to dissolve disciplinary boundaries,[180] and view resistance to such dissolution as a conservative reaction by those of middling age who have earned a position. Such persons would seek to defend the disciplinary status quo rather than "abolishing their formal positions and placing themselves in a new unstable boiling pot, in which essentially they would have to fight their way forward again, and without the most familiar tools

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[176] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 270, emphasis added.
[177] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 270.
[178] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 270.
[179] This would aid the problem not only present in 'Intro to Sociology' classes, but in sociology graduates, of having a room of differing answers (or non-answers) when the question 'What is Sociology?' is asked.
[180] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," in *The Uncertainties of Knowledge,* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 166-70.

they have used so successfully."[181] Indeed, "after 150 years of an amazing amount of work, world social science has much too little to show for itself and is unable to perform the social task that outsiders demand of it."[182] This gives rise to a series of academic anomalies which are becoming more and more obvious to the wider public,[183] something which Bourdieu and others seek to mitigate by their move towards public sociology. Wallerstein argues that the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries is, to a certain extent, inevitable as public (and economic) pressure on the administrators and government representatives will move them in such a direction, as "[t]heir job is not to preserve the organizational structure of the separate disciplines but to provide what is considered to be the optimal societal output in the production and reproduction of knowledge."[184] In Wallerstein's eyes, Weber's concern about instrumentalization has yet to reach its peak, although soon it will, and the last remnants of the university's medieval origins will be swept away and it will simply be what many have warned it has been becoming for years: an industrialized, means-focused, factory of knowledge.

There is a common contemporary desire within the social sciences to 'out critique' one another, combined with attempts to exist in the most specialized and siloed area of research and the blossoming of many new fields of study and academic programs. These occurrences seem to mirror on a wider academic level the problem of the groundless moral critic which MacIntyre identified in 1958-59.[185] A turn towards framing sociology as a tradition would help maintain fluid and flexible boundaries which remain *firm enough* to ground the inhabitant of the tradition, providing a camaraderie which leaves space for critique without dissolving the discipline. While what I am proposing could easily be read in bad faith as a conservative attempt to reject criticism, Blakely importantly notes that "MacIntyre has been a key figure in the advancement of an inherently critical social science."[186] Drawing from Schwartz to support MacIntyre's claims about translatability and the requirements for traditional grounding to make sense of the self and the

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[181] Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," 175-76.
[182] Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," 176.
[183] Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," 176.
[184] Wallerstein, "Anthropology, Sociology, and Other Dubious Disciplines," 177.
[185] MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 45-52.
[186] Jason Blakely, "The Forgotten Alasdair MacIntyre: Beyond Value Neutrality in the Social Sciences," *Polity,* 45, no. 3, (July 2013): 445.

other, both epistemologically and ethically, it is clear that a grounded and *bounded* discipline is a necessary starting point for its intelligibility:

> Binary categories are among the necessary conditions for the maintenance of organized activity. All such activity must be guided by ideas about right and wrong, the permissible and impermissible, the useful and the useless. Without these ideas there would be no way for individuals to differentiate the world, make it meaningful, or find and keep their place within it. On the collective level, an availability of objective dual categories not only reflects and sustains group boundaries; it also leads to joint action toward that which is classified. The expectations and moral evaluations of objects, and the particular direction of action taken for and against them, depend on how they are classified. Oppositional categories are social factors that organize feeling and action as well as thought.[187]

Conceptualizing sociology as a tradition helps consciously address the need for the elements noted by Schwartz, while not dissolving its critical capacity (either internally or externally). Given his engagement with Winch, a MacIntyrean sociology would necessarily be both interpretive "because it requires grappling with beliefs and actions that form contingently in light of other webs of beliefs" and critical "because normative evaluation is an inescapable feature of social explanation."[188] This inescapability occurs for two reasons: first, "social scientists working within the same tradition or framework as the objects of study must continually evaluate rational versus irrational beliefs and actions," and second, "when dealing with rival traditions, researchers must continually reckon with the way that a given theory of human action evaluates and implicitly challenges the other theories guiding actual human agents."[189] The normativity which Bourdieu seeks to avoid in his sociology (despite the normativity underlying his reasoning toward a public sociology), is not only unavoidable by MacIntyre's account, but is something which must be consciously engaged with for the tradition to remain critical.

7.3.(b) The Positives of Positivism (Without the Baggage)

As noted above, there are positivist elements present in Bourdieu, who cleaves tightly to the idea of sociology as a science (with the methods and philosophies which that entails). Any whiff of positivism in the contemporary age justifiably brings with it an air of concern, not merely for the

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[187] Barry Schwartz, "Polarity and Knowledge," in *Society & Knowledge: Contemporary Perspectives in the Sociology of Knowledge & Science*, (eds.) Nico Stehr and Wolker Meja (London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 330.
[188] Blakely, "The Forgotten Alasdair MacIntyre: Beyond Value Neutrality in the Social Sciences," 456.
[189] Blakely, "The Forgotten Alasdair MacIntyre," 456.

epistemological and ontological problematics of treating a discipline concerned with self-conscious agents whose actions and reactions cannot be predicted accurately and reliably as a natural science in the manner of physics. Despite this, MacIntyre – like Bourdieu – critically recognizes the methodological and philosophical advantages present in *elements of* positivism which should not be thrown out with the bathwater.[190]

While one might be concerned that replacing a Bourdieusian sociology with a more MacIntyrean one might result in an unnuanced wholesale rejection of the advantages of the natural sciences, this would not actually be the case. MacIntyre's critiques of Popper, especially the false dichotomies he presents such as: being *either* a historicist, *or* one with no overall view of history;[191] *either* being consigned to methodological individualism *or* a deindividualizing holism;[192] and perhaps most importantly, *either* we delegitimate ourselves as social scientists because of our normative concern and/or political partisanship, *or* we concern ourselves only with means and not ends.[193]

The first of these dichotomies allows us to either *be historicists* or have no overall view of history.[194] It was out of his many critiques of Marx that Popper developed this claim. Popper not only provides a false dichotomy in response to Marx's engagement with history, but he defines historicism as "the belief in unconditional trends in history," ascribing such beliefs to "the error of supposing that an historical process can be explained solely in terms of a law or laws without adding a statement of the initial conditions from which the process commenced."[195] Interestingly, "the error of which Popper believes Marx to be guilty, namely that of treating historical processes as if they were explicable in the same way as physical events were, is one which Marx himself indicated."[196] Indeed, for Marx, human history is a "successive liberation of possibility as economic limitation" is removed, and while these economic limitations seem to condition human action, they are not an exhaustive explanation of the dynamics of human action (something denoted by Marx's

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[190] See the discussion in §7.2.(d) for elaboration on MacIntyre's position.
[191] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150-51.
[192] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 151-52.
[193] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 152-53.
[194] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150.
[195] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150. See also Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 35-54.
[196] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150-51.

family of concepts within 'practical consciousness').[197] Because of this, MacIntyre points out that Popper is not only presenting a false dichotomy in response to Marx, he is also misrepresenting Marx's relation to history by defining historicism as something which commits one to gross error.[198]

The second of these is present in Popper's concept of 'methodological individualism.' This is the concept that "groups are to be understood as collections of individuals and that individuals are concrete while societies are abstract."[199] Such methodological individualism, for Popper, opposes the vice of 'holism,' the "view that social groups can and ought to be viewed as more than, or other than, just a collection of its members."[200] MacIntyre's criticism of this represents an obvious point of conjuncture with much sociological theory stemming from Durkheim. While Popper is rightfully concerned with "a belief in social groups and historical trends as states existing apart from individuals, of which individuals are but the playthings," MacIntyre notes that just as there is no history of society without concrete individuals, there are "no individuals who exist apart from their history or apart from their society."[201] By doing so, MacIntyre notes how we don't have to choose between the dichotomy Popper presents.

Lastly, Popper claims that "*either* we must be illegitimate partisans in the social sciences *or* … we can be concerned only with means and not with ends."[202] For Popper, the discoveries of the social sciences are limited, and the only feasible ends of social policy are limited and reformist – not revolutionary in any way. So either we can – by his account – accept a means-focused approach within the social sciences, or we fool ourselves into a false belief in revolutionary social science.[203] These critiques challenge the justifiably critiqued trends in positivism towards atomism, anti-historical contextualization, and the application of impossible methodological standards to the study of the social by *embedded members of that social*.

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[197] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 151.
[198] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150-51.
[199] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 151. See also Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 82, 130-43, 147-48, 157.
[200] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 152.
[201] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 152.
[202] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 152, emphases original.
[203] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 152-53.

Despite these valuable critiques, MacIntyre has, through his entire career, maintained the importance of another Piercean/Popperian influence upon positivism: falsifiability.[204] Theorists – whether philosophers, sociologists, biologists, or physicists – must be willing to make claims that could be proven wrong. This allows for the dialectical development of the subject of knowledge and the broader tradition. This is something which non-theorists are often paranoid about, leading to a lack of attempted falsification of theoretically unstable positions,[205] which has led to major problems of replication[206] in psychology, for instance.[207] While at first glance the replication crisis in psychology might not seem immediately connected to the question of falsifiability, it is largely the considered unimportance of the question of falsifiability in contemporary psychology which has led to a lack of attempted replication of positive results.[208] Such attempts at replication *are* attempts at falsification. In addition, disregard to the importance of falsifiability has contributed to a lack of publication of negative results[209] – seen as 'unimportant' and a shortcut to a failed career. Interestingly, statistical research methods across the social sciences attempt to insulate themselves from this mistake by specifying that a research hypothesis is never 'confirmed' or 'proven' by data collected, rather only ever 'rejected' or 'failed to be rejected.'[210] This is why what is tested is not the *alternative hypothesis* (as positive statement, say, that *x* influences *y*), but the *null hypothesis* (a negative statement that *x does not* influence *y*)[211] – a process which seeks falsification of

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[204] MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues," 163, 173, 188; MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori, 259; MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 19-23; MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification," 70; MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: a Thomistic Reading of Fides et Ratio," 187-88; MacIntyre, "Moral Dilemmas," 95-96; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency," 198.

[205] For the problems this has raised in a range of natural sciences, see John P. A. Ioannidis, "Why Most Published Research Findings Are False," *PLoS Medicine*, 2, no. 8 (August 2005): 696-701. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124

[206] Joachim Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing: On the Survival of a Flawed Method," *American Psychologist*, 56, no. 1, (January, 2001): 21. https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.56.1.16. Krueger notes the essential role that replicability plays in the practice of science. Citing Falk and Greenbaum, Krueger notes that "Instead of measuring the quality of research by the level of significance, it would be better judged by its consistency of results in repeated experiments [and] if a researcher does obtain the same result … more than once, it strengthens the conclusion that the results are not due to chance." (21).

[207] The 'Reproducibility Project' has emerged from the University of Virginia and the Center for Open Science as a response to this issue, attempting to re-test various results, and thus the theories growing out of them, which have never attempted to be falsified or retested, demonstrating a large number of problematic results. See "Reproducibility Project: Psychology," *OSF* Online, September 28th, 2023, https://osf.io/ezcuj/.

[208] By positive results I mean results where the research data appears to 'confirm' the initial research hypothesis.

[209] By negative results I mean results where the researcher 'fails' to 'confirm' the outcome they hypothesized.

[210] Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing: On the Survival of a Flawed Method," 22.

[211] While the theoretical defensibility of Null Hypothesis Significance Testing (NHST) has been challenged, the pragmatic applicability of the method when combined with the identification of plausible mechanisms and

hypotheses, helping to prevent precisely the crisis which psychology is currently in a state of recovering from. Psychology *does* seem to proceed from the appropriate 'assumptions of non-success' during Null Hypothesis Significance Testing (NHST), assumptions which Krueger defines as typical of 'risky' research "because the investigator doubts that the null hypothesis can be rejected," thus when "such an experiment 'works,' the findings are impressive."[212] Further to this, there are limitations to NHST which can only be partially circumvented through pragmatic use.[213] One such pragmatic mitigating factor is replicability.[214] Despite replicability helping to mitigate the methodological limitations of NHST, it is underutilized within contemporary psychology. While starting from NHST, the goal of 'impressive results' and its methodological and publication culture errs on the side of non-replication and non-publication of falsified (i.e., 'unimpressive') results. This contributes to a problem of *both* falsification *and* replication, as noted above. Drawing on Gigerenzer's Freudian metaphor, Krueger articulates this connection between cultures thusly:

> Although the frequentist superego forbids it, the Bayesian id wants to reject the null hypothesis on the basis of improbable evidence. The pragmatic Fisherian ego allows the id to prevail because otherwise nothing is accomplished (i.e., published). Thus neurotic arrangement is supported by social factors such as rigid training in the rituals of NHST and the stated policies of journal editors.[215]

These questionable research practices are not something which psychology is alone is suffering from,[216] and because of this it is important to consider the impact they could have on sociological research.

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recognition of the subjectivity of the researcher remains. For an interesting discussion of this, see Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing: On the Survival of a Flawed Method," 16-26.

[212] Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing," 20.

[213] Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing," 23.

[214] Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing," 21.

[215] Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing," 20.

[216] See for example, Marcus Crede and Peter Harms, "Questionable Research Practices When Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis," *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34, no. 1, (2019): 18-30; Thomas Mayer, "Misinterpreting a Failure to Disconfirm as a Confirmation: A Recurrent Misreading of Significance Tests*." IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, (2003): n. pag. Print; Bryan G. Cook and William J. Therrien, "Null Effects and Publication Bias in Special Education Research," *Behavioral Disorders*, 42, no. 4, (2017): 149-58.

MacIntyre's centring of falsifiability as a core philosophy of any science,[217] whether social or natural, helps consciously ground a MacIntyrean sociology in a manner which, much like the methodologies of social statistics, makes it resistant to such hoaxes as the 'Sokal Affair,' the 'Grievance Studies Affair,' or the replication crisis in psychology. Indeed, this MacIntyrean methodology, is as much grounded in his teleological account,[218] as it is in the statistical claims of Hays that "[t]here is no God-given rule about when and how to make up your mind in general."[219]

Not only does this MacIntyrean methodology maintain the internal consistency of the discipline/tradition, but it also makes it a less easy victim of public opinion. While the aforementioned issues can expose internal problematics within a discipline, they can also "spur greater division and polarization through ideological posturing and critique,"[220] and in so doing open not only critique between disciplines, but critique of the university and academia more broadly to the general public.[221] While critique of institutions is important, especially for MacIntyre, to resist their domination of academic practices,[222] MacIntyre notes the importance of academic traditions as historical communities which are necessary if any hope of interconnection between 'experts' and the wider public is possible.[223]

7.3.(c) Relativity (Without Relativism)

An area of parallel concern – as much raised by positivist academics as by the public – is that of relativism. An issue which has been of concern within philosophy and the social sciences for a long time in many forms, the constant struggle has appeared to between a groundless abstract universalism and a relativity which makes incomparable and unintelligible any claims outside a

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[217] MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification," 70; Alasdair MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends, and Contemporary Philosophical Issues," 173; MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to Its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of *Fides et Ratio*," 188; MacIntyre, "Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency," 198.
[218] See §7.3.(d) below for elaboration on this.
[219] Hays, cited in Krueger, "Null Hypothesis Significance Testing," 24.
[220] Reilly, "Public Deception as Ideological and Institutional Critique: On the Limits and Possibilities of Academic Hoaxing," 266.
[221] Reilly, "Public Deception as Ideological and Institutional Critique," 273.
[222] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.
[223] See his discussions of the interactions between 'plain persons' and philosophers throughout *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1* and *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, as well as his discussion of education and the university in Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre on Education: In Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36, no. 1 (2002): 1-19; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57, no. 4 (December 2009): 347-62; and Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*, (Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009).

hyper-specific location in time or space. This binary contention has moved beyond particular disciplines since at least the work of Kuhn, but more recently in the 'science wars' between so-called defenders of 'objective truth' and scientific rationality, and "epistemic relativist and science studies scholars skeptical of value-neutrality and objectivity in scientific research."[224] Despite drawing battle lines between seemingly 'scientific' and 'postmodern' worldviews, academics (and the non-academics participating in such division) are producing (and reproducing) a false dichotomy.

Since at least the beginning of his '*After Virtue* project,' MacIntyre has been seen by some as relativist,[225] despite consciously engaging with the 'relativist challenge,'[226] challenging their critiques,[227] as well as rejecting the position of relativism altogether.[228] What MacIntyre has challenged throughout his career has been precisely the false dichotomy between absolutist and relativist positions, seeking universalist concepts like 'human nature' grounded in the specificity of historical and social circumstance. Unlike hard-relativist positions, MacIntyre allows for the necessary 'give' to bridge the universalist positions of the likes of Hegel on one end, with the specific positionality of some field anthropologists on the other, without rejecting the possibility of universality *or* specificity. Indeed, both are necessary components of each other, and MacIntyre's account of traditions demonstrates the requirement of historical contingency for the development of movement towards universality, and argument developed in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and developed throughout his later work into *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*.

MacIntyre has sought to formulate "an ethics of human nature – where human nature is not merely a biological nature but also an historical and social nature" which is "historical, but not

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[224] Reilly, "Public Deception as Ideological and Institutional Critique," 271.
[225] John Haldane, "MacIntyre's Thomist Revival: What's Next?" in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, (eds.) John Horton and Susan Mendus, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 96-99.
[226] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 351-69. The connection between relativism and emotivism is discussed by MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (11-14, 16-35) and is expanded into a discussion of emotivism and expressivism in *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (17-19, 20-26, 29-30, 39-42, 47-48, 57-61, 67-68, 138-41, 152-55).
[227] Stephen P. Turner, "MacIntyre and the Philosophy of the Social Sciences," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 84;
[228] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 272-73.

relativistic" in its account of rational inquiry.[229] In so doing, he has maintained the possibility of specific historical and social positionality while necessarily connecting it to any general positions, whether epistemic, ontological, or ethical, thus maintaining *specificity* and *distinction* without falling into the absolutizing trap of groundless relativity that some have fallen. In this respect, a MacIntyrean sociology, despite being based in an account of traditions, doesn't lose its situational descriptive flexibility, *nor* its ethical and epistemic critical potential.

Contra MacIntyre, Bourdieu's broad-brush conceptualization of ideas like habitus, field, and capital trend towards a broad relativity wherein comparisons between many things are possible, because all social-historical phenomena are 'relative' to others by virtue of being social-historical phenomena. By presenting otherwise specific phenomena in such a manner, Bourdieu attempts to ground any point of comparison at the most abstract level. In doing so, however, he loses the *distinction* originally sought in his work, and the potential for *translation* between one social-historical specificity and another is also lost. Indeed, translation is *only* possible if there are different positions *to translate between*, and ironically general relativity presented by Bourdieu's theoretical position traps these different positions, making them seem *incomparable to one another on any level other than the most abstract*, thus making the idea of translation both meaningless and impossible. MacIntyre seeks to *specify* as a necessary tool for comparison, which in turn allows for the possibility of making general claims. Bourdieu, on the other hand, seeks to avoid the relativism of postmodernism by starting from a general position, but in doing so he loses the potential to actually compare, distinguish, or indeed make empirically supported general claims.

7.3.(d) Empirical Work, Research Methods, and MacIntyre

In addition to the advantages of viewing sociology as a tradition, we have the added value of MacIntyre's adjacent concepts such as practices, which allow for the diversification of disciplinary specialization, as well as description of social objects of study. Macintyre's concepts of practices and traditions allow for comparison between activities observed by sociologists in the field in a way which allows for parallels in terms of form, if not necessarily in function. MacIntyre argues that

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[229] Mark C. Murphy, "Introduction," in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, (ed.) Mark C. Murphy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7.

> Concepts are embodied in and draw their lives from forms of social practice. To understand how a particular concept is used it has to be located in terms of the activities and norms of some form of established practice. But any practice of any importance has a history. Practices come to be, are sustained and transformed, and sometimes perish as parts of the histories of particular societies. Within such societies the normative and evaluative modes of judgment and action which inform both activity within practices and attitudes to practices have to be handed on from one generation to another. And one aspect of the social embodiment of concepts is their transmission in this way. So to abstract any type of concept, but notable moral concepts, from the contexts of the traditions which they inform and through which they are transmitted is to risk damaging misunderstandings.[230]

Just like Bourdieu's concept of field, MacIntyre's account of practices has certain 'goods internal to it.' While the flexibility of field is undeniable, one of its weaknesses is that, like with habitus, it doesn't explain how individual consciously engage in the production and reproduction of a given field. Unlike Bourdieu's account of field, MacIntyre's account of practices helps to explain *how* the living out of different activities transmits – and provides the space to challenge – certain concepts and lifestyles. Bourdieu and MacIntyre both claim to acknowledge the social and historical context of the individual, but only MacIntyre seems to explain *how* this functions, while the breadth of Bourdieu's examples are repetitions of the *unconscious* reproduction of a given field. MacIntyre allows for this through his idea of the prereflective background, allowing him to differentiate between rational action and unconscious habits.

Further to this, MacIntyre avoids another problem which Bourdieu's 'field' runs into. While it is easy to claim that the applicability of field to any social or historical circumstance is useful such claims risk closing the door to falsification. MacIntyre's concept of practices has had much deployment in theory, as well as a range of examples based in reality. For instance, MacIntyre uses Danish fishing villages of Northern Jutland as an example to recognize the politics of shared deliberation, "governed by standards independent of the desires and interests of those who participate in it," while *also* recognizing that it is "not primarily a politics of bargaining between competing interests, although bargains may have to be made."[231] These shared deliberations presuppose "some large degree of agreement on the goods that are at stake in the decisions that have to be made. Its outcome, if successful, is agreement on what ought to be done

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[230] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 269.
[231] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 177.

in the interest of the local community to which particular and partial interests may have to be subordinated."[232] The Danish fishing villages which MacIntyre looked at were responding to a rising domination of large-scale fishing corporations. In such a circumstance, the practice of fishing ceases to be a *practice* in the sense that there are goods internal to it, as

> To work for such a corporation is to be like any other worker for a typical capitalist enterprise, that is, you are serving *their* ends for the sake of a livelihood of you and yours, and there is only or principally a financial connection between your work and the ends that you have as member of a family or household or as members of a local community.[233]

Contrary to this, those communities who maintained some form of communal fishing practices "found it difficult not to recognize three related common goods, those of family, crew, and local community, and achieve their own individual ends in and through cooperating to achieve those common goods."[234] This work, of a communal practice such as fishing, "is not a means to an external end but in a constitutive way of life, the sustaining of which is itself an end,"[235] and so necessarily challenges the economistic view that any way of life threatened by the free market must be 'inefficient.'[236]

Drawing on the formation of the *Thorustrand Kystfiskerlaug*, a guild of coastal fishermen, MacIntyre points out the importance of virtues as evidenced in the practice of communal fishing. Indeed, this guild was maintained only

> because of the qualities of mind and character especially in those who provided the community with leadership and the Guild with an articulate voice: *prudence* increasingly informed by economic and political know how, *justice* in the allocation of shares and in the structure of the Guild, *courage* in taking the right risks in the right way, and *temperateness* in not being seduced by the promises of the market.[237]

This example helps not only demonstrate the importance of virtues for the understanding of practices, but also the role of practices in resisting the domination of capitalism (in this instance), and domination of institutions generally. MacIntyre noted that if one were to subtract any one of these virtues, one would "subtract a necessary condition for the community's flourishing. It matters

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[232] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 177-78.
[233] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 179, emphasis original.
[234] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 179.
[235] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 179.
[236] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 180.
[237] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 180, emphasis added.

that the Guild is an association of families as well as of individuals, so that the relationship of the common good of the family to that of the workplace is understood."[238] While MacIntyre gives other examples,[239] there remains a lot of space for deployment into new sociological areas to continue to develop and cement the idea – leaving the concept open to both falsification and adjustment along the way.

MacIntyre's adherence to firm epistemological standards of rationality, as well as methodology, enables a sociologist to ground themselves in an account of reason which remains open to falsification and is historically located. This helps prevent empirical work from getting lost in a blind 'mere description;' rather, it allows for a combination of the 'thick description' of Ryle and Geertz, with an epistemic and ethical directionality influenced by both Marx and Aristotle, grounding the researcher in their object of research while allowing for reason to exist above and beyond any particular historical moment. Bourdieu, on the other hand, seeks to present rigid scientific methods while accounting for a level of relativity, but never sufficiently develops a scheme to explain *how* this occurs. MacIntyre, on the other hand, traces the historical development of rationality and ethics in such a way to demonstrate how one can move from contingency to generality and continue to adjust one's aim(s) the closer one gets to them. Indeed, despite his teleological approach, even MacIntyre's teloi are inherently falsifiable:

> To live well is to act so as to move toward achieving the best goods of which one is capable and so as to become the kind of agent capable of achieving those goods. But there is no particular finite good the achievement of which perfects and completes one's life. There is always something else and something more to be attained, whatever one's attainments. The perfection and completion of life consists in an agent's having persisted in moving toward and beyond the best goods of which she or he knows. So there is presupposed some further good, an object of desire beyond all particular and finite goods, a good toward which desire tends insofar as it remains unsatisfied by even the most desirable of finite goods, as in good lives it does.[240]

The possibility of reaching a particular telos and realizing that it represents a step on the road of life rather than a *final* end allows for the falsifiability of the idea that that telos represented such a final end. This process allows for the potential progress of the individual toward, and beyond,

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[238] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 180.
[239] For instance, the organization of Brazilian favelas of São Paulo, see MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 180-83.
[240] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315.

given ends. Indeed, it is this process of progressing from one end to another that, in an abstract sense, represents '*the*' end of the good human life for MacIntyre: it is not a *given* direction which makes us human, but our directed*ness* – our ability to direct and redirect ourselves towards given ends and be capable of re-evaluating these ends, or seeking out new ends, upon reaching them.[241]

In this sense, the falsification of ends through their achievement is an essential component of MacIntyre's *teleological directedness*. It is *progressive* in a manner influenced by Popper's philosophy of science (through the falsifiability of concepts) and Gadamer's horizon of possibility (through the necessary achievement of ontological, ethical, or epistemological position before realizing new possibilities beyond it), perhaps best summarized in MacIntyre's claim that "[t]o be puzzled and to attempt to solve or dissolve some puzzle or set of puzzles is to be directed towards an end, the end of understanding at some point in the future that we cannot now understand."[242] Further to this we see the influences of Aristotle's account of the good life, for whom moral and political philosophy ought to "make explicit the nature of our directedness towards our ends and the functions of various capacities and excellencies in achieving them and so to provide us both as agents and as educators of agents with standards of justificatory argument,"[243] and Aquinas' account of natural law whereby

> we are directed towards certain goods, as beings, as animals, and as rational animals. The exceptionless precepts of the natural law are those which, insofar as we are rational, we recognize as indispensable in every society and in every situation for the achievement of our goods and of our final good, because they direct us towards and partially define our common good.[244]

Lastly, we see the influence of Hegel and Marx's accounts of history (as being potentially progressively directional, rather than circular in the Ancient Greek or Nietzschean sense), in MacIntyre's claims that "each stage in the progress of rational agents is seen as a movement

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[241] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38-39; Alasdair MacIntye, "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 49; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75; Alasdair MacIntyre, "

[242] Alasdair MacIntyre, "What is a Human Body?" in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 101.

[243] MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against Some Modern Aristotelians," 38.

[244] MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive," 49.

towards goals that are only articulated in the course of the movement itself,"[245] and that the "past is present in the self in so many and so important ways that, lacking historical knowledge, our self-knowledge will be fatally limited."[246] This historical knowledge necessitates a discovery of "directedness in our particular actions and in our particular deliberations, so that we find ourselves inclined, first by nature, then by habituation acquired through education by others, to move towards certain types of goal, ordered and understood in certain specific ways."[247] Such historical movement of the individual through levels of self-knowledge allows for the ordering of methods of knowing, and represents the individual grounding of larger social-historical structures of knowledge like practices and traditions of inquiry.

With the importance of MacIntyre's question of directedness towards the good life in mind, a MacIntyrean sociology importantly exists – unlike Bourdieu's public sociology – in a wider account of this good life. A MacIntyrean sociologist is thus never *just* a sociologist. They are a sociologist *qua* academic, *qua* member of their communities, *qua* human being. This embeddedness allows for the avoidance of the replication of Bourdieu's errors of trying to scientifically separate the sociologist from the non-sociologist, while simultaneously trying to open sociology to the public for some ethical ends. MacIntyre allows for a *more sociological* account of sociology, where the sociologist is aware of their positionality as a member of their object of study, and the impact that necessarily will have upon said object. This awareness enables the asking of question of what normative role sociologists do, and ought to, have, unlike Bourdieu who seeks to simply avoid the question.

While MacIntyre has not extensively engaged with quantitative data collection and analysis like Bourdieu, there is nothing stopping a MacIntyrean sociologist from doing so – indeed, MacIntyre has asked that individuals take his concepts and test them in a wider range of ways than he is capable of doing.[248] This critical comparison between Bourdieu and MacIntyre leaves us with two lingering questions: what does a 'MacIntyrean sociology' look like? And what other comparisons and challenges might it be directed towards in the future deployment of MacIntyre in

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[245] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 84.
[246] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 85.
[247] MacIntyre, "Aquinas and the Extent of Moral Disagreement," 75.
[248] MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 273-74.

sociology? A MacIntyrean sociology is more than a sociological deployment of a handful of concepts drawn from MacIntyre, it is a re-envisioning of sociology as a form of practical philosophy, wherein members of the social world seek to describe elements of that social world – and by virtue of describing, improve their ability to ask and answer questions of the good. It is an entwinement of epistemological and ethical considerations, with an eye to both the historically contingent and historically continuous, enabling the sociologist to trace questions of general concern – whether ethical, epistemological, or ontological – across specific instances. It is a sociology which draws from the classics the *hope for* a general account of human nature, while tempering it with the awareness of social and historical difference and specificity. And it is a sociology which recognizes itself as a living tradition of thought which is lived out with every debate and instance of fieldwork, a tradition which is not *finished*, but can aim towards bettering itself and continue to flourish, regardless of the ups and downs of academic and social history, so long as this telos remains in view. It is a sociology which concerns itself with the same problems which gave rise to the consideration of 'public sociology,' without resulting in a leveling to the lowest common denominator, while remaining resistant to the arrogance of the ivory tower. As for the question of *how* such a sociology might be deployed *outside* of Bourdieu and the question of public sociology, we will have to address this in the conclusion.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 A Return to the Question of Dialogue

Having quested through centuries of thought, it is worth resting and reflecting upon what has been learned and where it might lead us next. Returning to Socrates, we are reminded that all dialogues must have an end. From MacIntyre we learn that such an end need not be absolute, but rather in itself part of a process of directedness towards further ends. While much more influenced by Aristotle than Plato, we can see in MacIntyre's account of human directedness a socially, historically, and philosophically articulate account of what comes between the imperfect questioner on the one hand, and the *eidos* of truth, justice, or the good society on the other. The presentation of shared influences and directions of focus throughout this work has aimed to present MacIntyre as *already engaged* in a form of dialogue with sociology. Despite the 'scientific' goals of some of the founders of the discipline, it was the metatheoretical frameworks provided by philosophy which even allowed for such a project of social science. This provides a point of ingress for MacIntyre into contemporary debates within the discipline, and this is only further supported by the various engagements – explicit or otherwise – between MacIntyre and core figures in sociological thought. Indeed, even his contemporary Aristotelianism does not necessitate distance between MacIntyre and sociology, given both Aristotle's influence on Marx and his pre-sociological social thought which continues to influence the discipline in many – often unconscious or indirect – ways.[1]

While it has hopefully been demonstrated that MacIntyre provides a range of useful tools for conceptualizing or (re)framing areas of sociological inquiry, this entire project started from a point of dialogical departure. As such, it does not aim to merely strip-mine MacIntyre for parts, a practice which is unfortunately common in contemporary sociology. Rather, it aims to bring the traditions represented by MacIntyre and contemporary sociology closer together, building bridges and opening doors to allow for fruitful future engagements both on a theoretical level and on a practical level – whether that of fieldwork and methodology, or policy development and ethical advocation. Dialogue is – or ought to be – a cooperative process aimed at a collective good. As demonstrated throughout the preceding chapters, MacIntyre, even in his critiques of Hegel,

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[1] Charles A. Ellwood, "Aristotle as a Sociologist," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, 19, (1902).

Nietzsche, Marx, Weber, and others, has always been open to engagement with them, recognizing the importance of their work and its continued impact, even if from his position this or that claim may be problematic, misleading, or just plain wrong. This demonstrates the dialogically essential Socratic virtues of knowledge, frankness, and kind regard, as well as a sort of earnestness tempered by prudence which is essential for any process of dialogue which aims at positive development rather than merely negative critique. Indeed, much like Habermas' engagement with Foucault,[2] we can see a repeated and concerted engagement with Nietzsche and more contemporary postmodernist thinkers[3] – something which he could have easily enough simply ignored. This demonstrates MacIntyre's openness to dialogue between traditions – indeed it is a core aspect of his theory of traditions that such debates within and between traditions must occur for the health of the tradition in question.

While over the final few pages I will summarize the two-way street of exchange between the theory and practice of MacIntyre and sociology, I must stress that this work represents the beginning of a larger project of applying MacIntyrean thought to sociology. As such, while some of the claims which follow – and indeed some of the claims which precede – this subsection may seem to be demonstrable, it is important to remember that my current aim is to provide the theoretical and metatheoretical means to frame questions of future demonstrability, not to provide a single, or series of, focused case-studies applying *x* MacIntyrean concept to *y* sociological field of investigation. In that we can see the directionality of the career before me, as in a MacIntyrean manner my quest is not yet done and requires a lot of future attempts at falsification and adaptation. With this in mind, we will now move to a brief overview of what MacIntyrean thought and sociological theory might offer one another, with an eye to the challenges presented by my goal of a more MacIntyrean sociological approach.

8.2 What Does MacIntyre Offer Sociology

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[2] See for example Jürgen Habermas, "The Critique of Reason as an Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Michel Foucault," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, (trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 238-65; Jürgen Habermas, "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, (trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 266-93.

[3] See for instance his frequent engagement with Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze variously in *After Virtue*, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, *Dependent Rational Animals*, and *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*.

I am not the first to suggest, or focus on, a connection between MacIntyre and sociology (positive *or* negative)[4] and MacIntyre's engagement with questions directly related to, and parallel to, sociology trace back to his origins as an academic.[5] The origins of his theory of traditions even stem in part from this connection, where he notes that "if rival and incompatible alternative conceptual schemes, such as the Hegelian and the Parsonian, are possible, then the contention that one of them must by some necessity apply to all possible societies becomes completely implausible."[6] This is a common issue within sociological theory, as many appear trapped within a particular theory which makes general claims – or give up on generality altogether officially despite appealing to it tacitly in the guise of postmodernism. MacIntyre goes on to show how some of the classic sociologists continue to attempt to overcome this problem:

> Marx in his mature work is clearly advancing both a particular theory about the character of capitalism as a self-destructive form of social order, and a general philosophy of history according to which all forms of social order are in the end likely to be self-destructive and at the same time creative of new social orders.[7]

This, however, cannot be viewed in the 'scientific' manner which many have historically attempted to apply to the social sciences. As "even if Marx's predictions had all turned out to be correct, Marxists would have had to show that the same predictions could not have been derived from any rival analysis."[8] This problematic remains common in sociological theory today, with various theories explaining the same social phenomena, without being able to scientifically claim 'theirs is the best.'[9] MacIntyre would likely argue that this is – at least in part – the consequence of the

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[4] See Peter McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*; Neil Davidson, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Lost Sociology," in Alex Law and Eric Royal Lybeck (eds.) *Sociological Amnesia: Cross-currents in Disciplinary History*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016); Robert T. Hall, "Communitarian Ethics and the Sociology of Morals: Alasdair MacIntyre and Emile Durkheim," *Sociological Focus*, 24, no. 2 (1991); Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre."

[5] MacIntyre's early career involved much sociological engagement. See Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 388-89, and he was in fact employed as a professor of sociology at the University of Essex at Colchester. See Neil Davidson, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Lost Sociology," 159. MacIntyre was also largely influenced by Karl Polanyi's economic sociology - see Caleb Bernacchio, "Alasdair MacIntyre as an Aristotelian Economic Sociologist: Reading *After Virtue* with *Dependent Rational Animals*," *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia*, 14, no. 1 (2019); MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 239. Connections with Goffman, Weber, and Marx can also be seen throughout much of MacIntyre's works.

[6] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 81.

[7] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 81.

[8] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 83.

[9] Here we can see one of the influences of Karl Popper, whose critiques of Marxism's unfalsifiability were questions MacIntyre sought to answer and remained concerns throughout his later work. See MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 259; MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends, Contemporary Issues," 163, 173; MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of Fides et Ratio," 187-88. For an overview of this Popperian concept, see Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, (London, UK: Routledge, 1963) for the development of his theory of falsifiability. See D. C. Stove, "How Popper's

specialization of the academic community which has continued to widen the distance between disciplines over the last several hundred years. The 'success' of the contemporary university is a question of Weberian efficiency, not of achievements of an educated mind for MacIntyre, who notes that

> Sometimes we need to correct what economists tell us by appealing to the historians, and sometimes of course vice versa. … To be educated is, on this view, not only to know how to bring each discipline to bear in appropriate ways, but also how to respond to the unjustified claims made in the name of each. And for this we need not the contracted mind of the specialist, but a different sort of mind.[10]

Indeed, MacIntyre notes that "whatever universities are achieving, they are not producing educated minds or, to put matters more justly, they are doing so only incidentally and accidentally."[11] This holism of education is one which necessitates something largely absent from contemporary sociology: a teleological understanding of knowledge.[12]

Rational explanations presented within a range of academic spheres are always, MacIntyre notes, partial and incomplete, in a way which ought to direct our attention to a more holistic range of consideration. Despite the apparent unification of explanations as one's inquiries proceed,

> our explanations are always imperfectly unified, just as they always remain in some respects incomplete, and so our enquires never terminate, are never final. What they presuppose is twofold: first, that we are indeed directed towards a final, if unattainable end, that we do have a conception of what it would be to have achieved a kind of understanding that is perfected and completed – for it is only by contrast with this conception that we characterise our present explanations as partial, imperfect and incomplete – and secondly, and correspondingly, that the order of things, although indefinitely complex, has an intelligible unity that is gradually and increasingly disclosed by our enquiry and that will continue to be disclosed by those enquiries, no matter how far we carry them.[13]

This holds as much for the pedagogical and policy considerations of education, as it does for the realms of inquiry *within* those disciplines which make up the academic horizon, sociology

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Philosophy Began," *Philosophy* 57, no. 221, (1982): 381–87 for a critical discussion of how Popper's theory of science is *actually* based on an equivocation between 'irrefutable' and 'unfalsifiable.' Despite this Popperian influence, MacIntyre remained critical of many of Popper's representations of Marxism. See MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," 36.

[10] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 353.

[11] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 354.

[12] Something largely absent from modern theory, whether moral of sociological. See Bernacchio "Alasdair MacIntyre as an Aristotelian Economic Sociologist," 25-26.

[13] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 356.

included. While a surface-level engagement with MacIntyre in this teleological regard may result in dismissal by a sociologist – who might claim that the continued engagement with Marx, Durkheim, and Weber shows that sociological knowledge continuously renews itself and thus sits outside a scientific, or positivist, understanding of progress – this shallow interpretation would miss the weight and importance of MacIntyre's point, a point he repeats throughout his work in various ways.[14] Indeed, this would be a reading of MacIntyre through a liberal, Enlightenment lens – the very lens MacIntyre spends the majority of his career critiquing. Progress for MacIntyre is not a unidirectional, deterministic road down which one is tumbling helplessly towards the 'End of History.'[15] Rather, it is a phenomenon whereby we can see how more complete understandings of our present state of knowledge relates to past states of knowledge and understandings thereof; how each relates to posited future states of knowledge; how explanations thereof relate to those given by rival traditions and different disciplines; and how all such epistemic developments and comparisons require an epistemic holism across time and space. The economic rationalist looks at the unpredictability of certain aspects of human life as a failure of economics in its contemporary state – they see a "perfected and completed" level of economic knowledge which leads to perfect predictability. They do not, however, use this *possibility* of perfection to also recognize its unattainability; nor that the final "order of things … will continue to be disclosed by those enquiries, no matter how far we carry them."[16] MacIntyre provides a useful tool in this regard to help challenge those who claim sociology fails as a discipline wherever its positivist, natural scientific-style predictions fail.[17]

MacIntyre also helps combine the commonly critical aspects within sociological theory with the positives which help build society up rather than merely critique issues to the ends of the earth without positing resolutions. This is an issue MacIntyre recognized early in his career[18] and

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[14] See, for instance, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-25.
[15] See Fukuyama's mish-mashed Hegelian-Nietzschean interpretation of history, for instance. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006).
[16] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 356.
[17] See MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 93-101, 259; MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology of Bureaucratic Authority;" MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," and elsewhere for his discussion of predictability/unpredictability within the social sciences.
[18] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 92-93, "[J]ust as Christianity has been much better at describing the state of fallen men than the glories of redeemed men, so Marxism is better at explaining what alienation consists of than in describing the future nature of unalienated men. Yet it is clear that the concept of a human nature freed from alienation is not an empty one, and that its content cannot be understood apart from its origins. Man rescued from alienation will be liberated man, but in what will his liberation consist?"

developed into his mature theories.[19] For MacIntyre the question of *hope* as a social virtue is one he has engaged with since his early years.[20] That hope is precisely a virtue inculcated by an educated mind which has the capacity to realize the possibility of progress towards the telos of a particular discipline, as well as the telos of human good, and *how these progresses relate to one another*.[21] While critical of many aspects of Hegel, the hope borne in Hegel's account of history can be seen here.[22]

From this we can see both the large-scale interdisciplinarity striven for by MacIntyre's traditions-theoretic approach, and the hermeneutic concerns of human action, which he summarizes in part as containing three central questions of knowledgeability which recognize

> first, that what we are not doing or are failing to do by doing what we do may be as important as what we do; secondly, that ignorance of relevant facts from a variety of disciplines may make us unable to recognize aspects of what we are doing; and thirdly that, by focusing on particular aspects of what we are doing we may conceal from ourselves other aspects.[23]

In other words, the things we don't know we know, and the things we don't know we don't know, are as impactful upon our actions as the things we know we know and the things we know we don't know, but specifically in the sense of human action, the choices we make, and the historical traditions of thought we inhabit.

While academic knowledge makes up a large chunk of the traditions of inquiry which MacIntyre concerns himself with, such knowledge is necessary but insufficient for a human agent to answer the question 'what are you doing?' To do so, "[s]he or he needs also to know how to

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[19] See all the positive ethical assertions in virtue theory and theories of traditions.
[20] MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, 89, 116.
[21] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 358. Such relationality can be seen in scientific theory, although it is often tacit in the scientist's active work: "the underlying presupposition of scientific enquiry is that, even although each of these particular attempts to characterise the intelligible unity of nature has either already failed or may at some point in the future fail, there is at a deeper level a unity yet to be discovered and an understanding yet to be achieved, so that we are committed to presupposing belief in an ordering power without which the concept of a continuing intelligible and unified order would be empty."
[22] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84. "Human action is characteristically neither blind and goalless nor the mere implementation of means to an already decided end. Acting that is the bringing about of such an end by a calculated means certainly has a place, but a subordinate place, in human activity. That it is only in the course of the movement that the goals of the movement are articulated is the reason why we can understand human affairs only after the event. The owl of Minerva, as Hegel was later to put it, flies only at dusk. The understanding of human beings is not predictive in the way natural science is."
[23] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 359-60.

deploy that knowledge when and as it is required and this ability can be developed only through engagement in a range of practices."[24] Here we see both the importance of practices that MacIntyre has concerned himself with for a long time, and the importance that the tacit, background knowledge of 'how to' apply knowledge in the *doing of things*. We can see here the distinction between Gilbert Ryles' 'knowing-that' and 'knowing-how,'[25] where MacIntyre does not get lost in the classical ivory tower of 'knowing-that' – a collection of facts which are irrelevant or inapplicable to the everyday.

Indeed, MacIntyre's concern with practical reasoning/rationality,[26] and the reasoning of the 'plain person,'[27] shows that the 'high thinking of theory' or the university must always remain grounded. Something which sociology struggles with,[28] trying to balance theory and practice – tradition and lived experience – with many falling on either end of the spectrum, resulting in either an isolationism of theory, or a striving for 'public sociology,' the problematics of each hopefully having been demonstrated by now. Many have critiqued those engaged in inductive micro-sociology as missing the 'big picture,' and many have critiqued those engaged in 'armchair theorizing' as undermining the experience and knowledge of persons 'on the ground' – a critique *especially* important when the persons on the ground are historically impoverished or disempowered groups. It is for exactly this reason that MacIntyre has continued to use and develop his concept of 'practices' since it's introduction in *After Virtue*, as it is inherently the deployment of practical reasoning within practices that disconnects standards of excellence from the sole purview of the ivory tower (or the Church, or the government, etc.).[29] In this way, practices necessarily represent a locus for the praxis between theory and its application, and maintain a critical and potentially revolutionary possibility within any philosophy or social science. MacIntyre puts it well when he says that "it is crucial for plain persons that they should have this

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[24] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 360.
[25] Adolf and Stehr, *Knowledge*, 29.
[26] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity;* MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 23-24, 45-46, 161-62, 222-25; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Alasdair MacIntyre, "Practical Rationalities as forms of Social Structure," *Irish Philosophical Journal* 4, (1987).
[27] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 360; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues, and Goods," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 66, no.1 (Winter 1992); MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, Ch 1-4; MacIntyre, "Practical Rationalities as forms of Social Structure;" MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks: A Thomistic Reading of *Fides et Ratio*."
[28] To put it in the words of a friend: 'practice without theory is aimless, and theory without practice is simply mental masturbation.'
[29] Ron Beadle and Kelvin Knight, "Virtue and Meaningful Work," *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 22, no. 2 (2012): 439.

type of education [one that covers both practical and theoretical reasoning], so that they can begin to recognise when those who exercise power over their lives no longer know what they are doing."[30] To go further, MacIntyre's understanding of practical reasoning as a process helps bridge the problem of much of contemporary social science in the divide between theory and practice (or action). Drawing from Aristotle, MacIntyre notes that the conclusion of practical reasoning *must be an action* "and not the utterance of a decision, or an expression of intention. Indeed, such an utterance or expression would be an interruption of the process of practical reasoning."[31] This action-based theory which undergirds MacIntyre's philosophy, combined with his critical account of the academic structures which modern sociology inhabits, along with many of his specific concepts, provide useful tools for the contemporary sociologist. More importantly, these frameworks provide a metatheoretical grounding for applied sociological work over and above any given conceptual deployment in the field.

Using MacIntyre to draw on the normative potential in sociological action also provides a ethical grounding for action which otherwise would simply be either 'claimed' as moral, or moral by the liberal standards of the system which many sociologists remain critical of, causing obvious issues. While many other sociologists would claim a Marxist ethical grounding, or attempt to finagle some kind of postmodern ethics into their work, MacIntyre's own position provides a useful example of how one can be influenced by Marxist concerns and theories, without 'paying the party fee.' Indeed, even though Marxist concern with the praxis seems a useful means for sociologists to avoid becoming trapped on either side of the fence between theory and practice, as many Marxist sociologists get caught in the arguments of this or that position being 'too abstract' or 'directionless' as do non-Marxist sociologists. MacIntyre provides a historical and normative grounding which is open to further development and self-critique (unlike those who canonize Marx, or any theorist for that matter), but which holds together the theoretical and practical aspects of sociology as a discipline.

8.3 What Might Sociology Offer MacIntyre?

[30] MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University," 360.
[31] MacIntyre, "Practical Rationalities as Forms of Social Structure," 5.

MacIntyre already has, it could be said, his foot in the pond of sociology and associated disciplines. His engagement with Marx,[32] Durkheim,[33] Weber,[34] as well as Goffman[35] and others,[36] shows not only an awareness of the bases of sociological theory, but some of their later evolutions and deployments. Sociology has variously represented for MacIntyre a tool for analysis,[37] and an ideological construct,[38] especially in relation to our understanding of selfhood.[39] As his career progressed, his engagement with sociology has become more critical, although he has still carried with him ideas and modes of thought which he picked up from sociological theory.

There are two notable concerns of MacIntyre's which put him in a position critical of *both* positivist/mechanistic social sciences, *and* of critics of social sciences: MacIntyre's concern for

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[32] Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson (eds.). *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism,* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009).
[33] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Weber at his Weakest," *Encounter*, 25, no. 5. (London, UK: 1965[1953]): 87, "[T]he best advice given to those who wish to read Weber on religion would perhaps be 'Read Durkheim instead!'"; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 368-69; MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 110, 178.
[34] See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Beyond Max Weber?" *The New Statesman*, 61, (January, 1961): 181-84. "Weber represents the great crisis of the liberal intellect," (181). In this sense, 181-84, Weber's work "consists in the construction of detailed and intricate historical studies which do in fact break through the conceptual framework in which he tries to contain them. The astonishing result is that Weber's work is at once immense and fragmentary. They evoke, they almost necessitate, and attempt to do better;" and the works of Mannheim and Lukacs represent "rival attempts to complete and transcend Weber," (184); MacIntyre, "Weber at his Weakest," 85, "Sociological achievement may be diminished by yielding to either of two opposed temptations: that of generalising away the substance of particular social relationships into a series of theoretical abstractions, or that of so eschewing the general and embracing the particular that all that is left is a catalogue of unrelated facts. It is one of the marks of a great sociologist to exhibit the tensions and the ambiguities that result from resistance to both these temptations. Nowhere is this tension more evident than Max Weber's work."
[35] See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 32, 35, 115-17, 204, 221.
[36] Including but not limited to Marcuse, Freud, Gadamer, Hegel, Mannheim, Smith, Deleuze, Derrida, Lukacs, Wittgenstein, Kuhn, etc.
[37] See for instance McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*, 127; Bernacchio, "Alasdair MacIntyre as an Aristotelian Economic Sociologist;" Caleb Bernacchio, "Does MacIntyre's Moral Sociology Presuppose a Personalist Moral Psychology? MacIntyre and Tomasello on Moral Psychology," *Front. Commun*., 7, (February 2022); MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 261; Hannan, "Alasdair MacIntyre," 388-89; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 23, 72-73, 116-17, 225.
[38] MacIntyre, "Social Science Methodology as Ideology;" Davidson, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Lost Sociology," 159-60; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution," *Comparative Politics*, 5, no. 3, (Apr. 1973).
[39] MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 204-25.

falsifiability,[40] and the unpredictability of the future.[41] On the subject of falsifiability, MacIntyre builds on elements of Karl Popper's work, noting that because falsification must remain a possibility for any mode of inquiry, especially any theory that claims truth, as it is

> in one way a victory and not a defeat for the Aristotelian conception of enquiry when Aristotelian physics proved vulnerable to Galileo's dialectical arguments against it. And it is a mark of all established genuinely Aristotelian modes of enquiry that they too are open to defeat; that is, what had been taken to be adequate formulations of a set of necessary, apodictic judgments, functioning as first principles, may always turn out to be false, in the light afforded by the failure by its own Aristotelian standards of what had been hitherto taken to be a warranted body of theory. Lesser partial failures of this kind are landmarks in the history of every science.[42]

Landmarks such as the development of Aquinas' approach which overcame the failures of Aristotle and Augustine, each with each other, which only developed out of an openness to contradiction and falsifiability.[43]

Regarding predictability MacIntyre argues that insofar as society represents something too complex and different from the natural world, such that natural science style predictability is not possible. Indeed, positivist approaches in the social sciences assume "that there is nothing distinctive in human behaviour which might render it unamenable to modes of explanation appropriate for understanding the behaviour of molecules of [sic] mainsprings or muscles or maggots."[44] With this assumption comes another, more problematic one: "that the mode of understanding human beings resembles the mode of understanding natural objects in that to

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[40] Something which represents an element of Karl Popper's critique of Marxism, see MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 259. See also, MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," 70; MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends, Contemporary Issues," 163; "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 187-88. See also MacIntyre's discussions of contradictions and the epistemic crises and moral dilemmas that develop from them; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Dilemmas," in *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, Volume 2*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 85-100; MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises and Dramatic Narrative;" and MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 349-69.
[41] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 93-95; MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 3; MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 84; MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 159.
[42] MacIntyre, "First Principles, Final Ends, Contemporary Issues," 163.
[43] MacIntyre, "Philosophy Recalled to its Tasks," 187-89.
[44] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 146.

understand is to control, or at least is to take the first steps towards controlling."[45] The consequences of this are obvious throughout the history of the social sciences.[46]

These two concerns of MacIntyre's, which he returns to throughout his career, represent a position *both* building on the likes of Karl Popper, *and* critical of many of the Popperian assumptions taken up by positivist social scientists,[47] especially the mechanistic goals to "explain, to predict, to control; to be able to see human behaviour as the outcome of physiological or environmental determinants; and to unify this understanding in a scheme as simple as Newton's."[48] MacIntyre criticizes contemporary social sciences insofar as they are "non-historical, atomistic, content with limited, contextless, low-level generalisations, and unable to discern or construct theories of overall social structure. These are, for Professor Popper, precisely the features which any well-constructed human science would have to have."[49] Popper, in attempting to overcome the 'sin of historicism,' provides a series of false dichotomies[50] - taken up by both social scientists and philosophers.

Popper's critiques represent for MacIntyre part of a general trend of flawed critiques aimed at the social sciences:

> I have argued that the human sciences have been dominated by the conceptual ideal of laying bare the clockwork of human nature. For this ideal has shaped the thought both of those who have accepted it and of those who have rejected it. Those who have rejected it have accepted it as the only form in which the ideal of a general understanding of society might be formed; and so in rejecting it they have rejected the concept of any such general understanding. Or else they have accepted the mechanistic ideal as the paradigm of rational explanation; and in rejecting it they have fallen back upon treating human life as irrational and inexplicable. We can merely record and amass our records; or we have to point to irrational and incomprehensible forces.[51]

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[45] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 146.
[46] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 137. The modern rise of specialization proceeded largely as a natural scientific project, and the positivist consequences of this were that "power has become a means not to possibility but to a destruction of all possibility. That comparatively primitive technology which took us from gas-light to gas-chamber has been replaced by the achievement which took us from the disintegration of the atomic nucleus to the disintegration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." For a brief discussion of eugenics, phrenology, and shoddy psychological work, see MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls."
[47] MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises and Dramatic Narrative," 19, 23.
[48] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 146.
[49] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 150.
[50] Discussed in Chapter 7, §7.3.(b).
[51] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 153.

Such false dichotomies represent a failure to understand Hegel and Marx; a failure "endemic not just to the minds of our sociologists but in the life of our society."[52] Indeed, Popper's rationalism divorced from history is common within non-Marxist sociology and can be seen in Parsons. Parsons, building on Hobbes, begins with "individuals and their desires at one pole," and asks how "social order is created at the other."[53] While such a mechanistic approach[54] can explain social stability, it cannot explain social change, leaving Parsons' work not only unrevolutionary, but "profoundly non-historical."[55] This 'machine model' can give, at best, an account of *how we are acted upon*, but *not how we act*[56] – it is, then, out of this that we see the rise of 'agency/structure' debates across a range of social theory.

Contra Parsons, we can see C. Wright Mills' attempts to explain social change, but the results of such explanation are often also not revolutionary. In seeking to speak to those at both the top of social hierarchies and the 'ordinary man,' Mills finds that "those at the top are unlikely to want to hear and ordinary men are unlikely to be able to hear," indeed, "[i]f Parsons showed us a social equilibrium in which individuals are wholly absorbed, Wright Mills shows us a machine in which individuals are trapped."[57] Despite the political polarity between Parsons and Mills, the end problematic is the same: either one accepts the fallacious 'methodological individualism' of Popper, or one – regardless of political position, or account of history – ends up an individual 'lost within the social.' This lack of balance is something MacIntyre critiques philosophers and sociologists for throughout his career and was something which he sought to move past in his own work.

MacIntyre has always had one eye on sociology, but his major engagements – including as a professor of the philosophy of the social sciences – took place during his early career when many of the problems he identified were forefront and unresolved. I argue that sociology represented a means for practical philosophy, but that the apparent lack of resolution of the issues he was raising within the discipline between the 1950s-70s lead to him not taking up a more explicitly

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[52] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 153.
[53] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 154.
[54] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 145-48. MacIntyre identifies the common desire for mechanical explanation of social phenomena with the social sciences.
[55] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 154.
[56] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 146-47.
[57] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 155.

sociological means of pursuing his theoretical and practical goals. This, combined with his shift from a more Marxist to a more Aristotelian position, contributed to what might be considered his current state of reference within the academic world – where he is free to draw from, deploy, and comment on a range of sociological thought and contribute to debates on sociological problems, but is largely ignored by the sociological community. I am arguing however that his early engagement with sociology represents a stall rather than a crash, as evidenced by his continued reference to sociological thinkers, a telos which has – by Smith's account – 'stagnated.'[58] As such, it is a project which can be returned to, refreshed, and reignited.

MacIntyre's rejection of positivist and overly mechanistic sociological approaches, his concern for the falsifiability of theories and the inherent unpredictability of social life, and his firm stance on the essentiality of understanding history to understand anything make him a fascinating theorist who provides a valuable means for overcoming positivism and false dichotomous approaches to the social sciences, without falling into the relativist trap of postmodernism.[59] Likewise, his focus on questions of human nature and all that entails – communication, vulnerability, flourishing, desire, social embeddedness, directionality, etc. – flies in the face of some relativist thinkers by actually returning to some of the core questions the discipline began with, but in a way tempered by the range of concerns raised over the last century and a half. Concerns which have in recent years, it could be argued, swung the pendulum of academic thought too far in the other direction: dismissing entirely questions of human nature.

Indeed, even while rejecting questions of human nature or mechanistic general accounts of society, contemporary sociologists often are still proceeding on tacit assumptions about human nature or ground their work in problematic and incomplete critiques of previous thought. While the general mechanistic approaches of early sociological work are uncommon today, many sociologists build their work on the adaptations which came as a response to the breakdown of

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[58] Christian Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failures, and Evil*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015): 224-27.

[59] MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," 85. "The past is present in the self in so many and so important ways that, lacking historical knowledge, our self-knowledge will be fatally limited. Moreover, this type of self-knowledge could never be yielded by theoretical sciences that aspire to explain behavior in terms of physiological structures and processes. It is in fact just because out history constitutes us as what we are to so great an extent, that any explanation that omits reference to that history, as did and do the explanations of phrenology and neurophysiology, may explain the aptitudes and conditions of the human body, but not those of the human spirit."

those theories, and this is something which MacIntyre identifies as *a failure to overcome the initial problematics*. What went wrong with these general mechanistic theories, in the eyes of contemporary theory, was

> not its mechanistic characters, but the *a priori* character of its generality. What we need is to amass particular studies of particular cases. From these we shall derive low-level generalisations and correlations; the study remains causal, mechanistic and manipulative, but it is accepted that as yet we cannot ascend to the simplicity of an overall theory.[60]

Such a description may sound familiar to many sociologists engaged in a range of data collection and analyses across a range of fields, and putting suggestions forwards to departments, businesses, and governments. The general and mechanistic frameworks remain, they have just been shrunk in the case of the mechanistic and placed outside the realm of the achievable in the case of the general. In this way, contemporary sociologist runs the risk of presuming they are theoretically and methodologically superior to the problematic themes of the past, when really the problematic undercurrent remains in their present work.

MacIntyre helps us get at the root of this problem which can be demonstrated by recognizing an interesting parallel. In his identification of liberalism – the Enlightenment-inspired thought which sought to overcome traditions entirely – becoming a tradition whilst remaining unaware of this fact, we saw MacIntyre demonstrating the problems involved in liberalism's presuming of an end to history, that all debates had been settled and all opponents defeated. Likewise, many contemporary sociologists have presumed that the past critiques had sufficiently rooted out the problem of general mechanistic accounts of society, and preceding on this assumption, have failed to recognize that the core issue has infiltrated and continued to survive in much of contemporary sociological methodology, as well as much of its theory. I would argue this has contributed to the recurrent problem in contemporary sociology where many sociologists are seemingly forced into two camps: 'statisticians with no theory,' or 'postmodernists with no methods.' I am, of course, taking liberties with such a generalization, and some elaboration is required.

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[60] MacIntyre, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," 148, emphasis original.

On the one hand you have (often quantitative) sociologists influenced by the Popperian natural scientific critiques about the metatheoretical and methodological role of the social sciences:

> (1) to be is to be subject to measurement … (2) knowledge is used for prediction and control, (3) knowledge can be derived solely from 'observations,' collected as measurable 'data,' (4) all theories must be generalized from empirical referents, (5) 'metatheories,' such as those generated by Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and other classical writers, are strictly occluded, when not ignored, on the grounds that their claims are not falsifiable, and finally (6) all knowledge requires some sort of methodological ground.[61]

These assumptions about what the social sciences ought to do as a 'science' have largely resulted in either a denial of Popper's claims as scientistic or missing the point of the role of the social sciences (as in the case of the postmodernists), or with sociologists attempting to proceed in a natural scientific manner. Those who seek to proceed according to these principles often don't recognize the tension between point 2 and point 5, as attempts to predict and control are always grounded in some metatheoretical assumptions about a) the means by which this ought to take place, b) the ends towards which such control ought to be directed. Instead of a destruction of such so-called unfalsifiable metatheories, we see a submergence into the tacit realm of still-present metatheoretical assumptions, a process which is dangerous given that it makes reflexive evaluation and correction of these metatheoretical assumptions difficult if not impossible. In this case, you have sociologists who claim to have overcome the problems of metatheory (or 'general theory') and are thus only left with specific theories of *x* or *y* phenomenon, and a methodology to which they adhere. Because they cannot achieve the same kind of generalization from specific observations as can be achieved in the natural sciences they proceed – whether through the false hope that 'just *one more* datum point' will bring them there, or the abandonment of hope altogether – on the presumption on the impossibility of general theory: leaving us with 'statisticians no theory.'

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[61] Stanley Aronowitz and Robert Ausch, "A Critique of Methodological Reason," *The Sociological Quarterly,* 41, no. 4, (2000): 700.

On the other hand, you have a hodgepodge of theorists – some influenced by postmodern[62] (as well as hermeneutic and phenomenological)[63] critiques of method, many of which have in turn been influenced by the work of Paul Feyerabend[64] – who have ostensibly seen 'the truth:' that no general theory can be produced of society,[65] and so an articulate methodology is irrelevant. All that remains is micro-level narrative descriptions and endless theorizations – often only tangentially related to the outcomes of such qualitative work: leaving us with 'postmodernists with no method.'

This, of course, represents a false dichotomy, but one which it is important to tease out rather than dismiss entirely because of the impact it has on the thinking of actual sociologists. One of the things MacIntyre offers sociology is a renewed consideration of the general, while overcoming the problematics of the original general theories in sociology. In doing so he provides tools for overcoming the false dichotomy of theory *or* method denoted above. This is not, however, a one-way process being suggested. Sociology has in many ways advanced beyond the critiques of MacIntyre, and there are a range of specifics which can be brought into MacIntyre's work to benefit *his* overall theories, as has hopefully been demonstrated through the dialogical engagements between MacIntyre, Marx, Weber, and Bourdieu in the previous chapters.

8.4 Responding to the Challenges of a MacIntyrean Approach

In Chapters 4, 6, and 7, I used the theories of Marx, Weber, and Bourdieu as a dialogical foil to test MacIntyre's positions against a range of sociological approaches, with the goal of either using MacIntyre to help overcome problems the sociological positions are either unaware of, or incapable of addressing sufficiently. The opposite is true as well: the range of sociological areas of study offer a rich theoretical and methodological toolkit to help strengthen MacIntyre's positions or shine a light on weaknesses which need excising. Especially regarding the binary between 'statisticians' and 'postmodernists' noted above, MacIntyre provides a theoretical and

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[62] See for instance James Joseph Scheurich, "A Postmodernist Critique of Research Interviewing," in *Research Method in the Postmodern*, (ed.) James Joseph Scheurich, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 61-79; or Bradley G. Bowden, "Empiricism, Epistemology and Modern Postmodernism: A Critique," *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 14, no. 4, (2019): 481-97.
[63] See for instance Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth & Method*, (trans.) Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013; and Aronowitz and Ausch, "A Critique of Methodological Reason," 699-719.
[64] Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (London, UK: Verso, 1993).
[65] Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 5, (1988): 376.

metatheoretical framework through which postmodern critiques can be addressed and methodological tools can be deployed and tested. In turn, these critiques and tools can also be used to sharpen and strengthen the framework provided by MacIntyre, and it is now to this very end of forging a stronger MacIntyrean position through the fires of sociological critique that I now turn.

It is a critique presented by many, including generally supportive theorists, that many of MacIntyre's claims are unsupported by wider sociological data. An example can be seen in Blackledge's claim that

> Since the 1960s MacIntyre seems to have swung from a too-simplistically optimistic conception of the working-class struggle to a too-simplistically pessimistic interpretation of the same. Consequently, while his mature concept of practice provides a powerful basis from which to ground his continued opposition to capitalism, despite his intention of going beyond the pessimism associated with the Frankfurt School MacIntyre does not provide an adequate account of some of these examples of virtuous communities of resistance to capitalism to which he refers in his work.[66]

It is precisely this lack of data which sociology can offer MacIntyre's work, and a possible direction for my future work to aim towards: using MacIntyre as a starting point for fieldwork which in turn is used to critique and strengthen MacIntyre's theory. It is awareness of exactly this kind of criticism which we must be open to – and in the spirit of good-faith dialogue engage with – before proceeding to the specific areas of sociological theory wherein MacIntyre may be applicable; the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I began this work by noting how MacIntyre represents a figurehead of an ongoing tradition of inquiry which has its origins in the beginning of Western philosophy. This is, I will admit, a favourable account of MacIntyre and his work, and one which many might be critical of. This also represents one of many aspects of MacIntyre which there have been critiques of throughout his career. It would be academically irresponsible of me to proceed further without addressing at least some of them.

Paul Blackledge for instance has critiques the flaws of MacIntyre's youthful Marxism,[67] while Russell Keat argues that MacIntyre needs a better account of the market – with Keat claiming

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[66] Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Social Practices, Marxism and Ethical Anti-Capitalism," 881.
[67] Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism;" Blackledge, "Utopias" 421.

that the practices MacIntyre claims are threatened by the market were actually brought into being *by* the market[68] - and Timothy Chappell claiming that MacIntyre doesn't actually offer an alternative to the liberalism he critiques.[69] Kelvin Knight does an excellent job of covering a range of such critical engagements with MacIntyre's work across the range of his career.[70]

As with most theorists with such a legacy, MacIntyre has been accused of representing many different positions, despite being consistent throughout his career of clearly responding to misunderstandings and misrepresentations. He has been claimed by conservatives,[71] communitarians,[72] marketing and management theorists,[73] and others, despite rejecting all these

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[68] Keat, "Ethics, Markets, and MacIntyre," 251-55.
[69] Timothy Chappell, "Utopias and the Art of the Possible," *Analyse & Kritik,* 30 (2008): 179-203; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xx-xxiv.
[70] Knight, "A Guide to Further Reading," 277-94.
[71] MacIntyre has often been critiqued as 'nostalgic' about past times which cannot return, and 'pessimistic' about modernity. See Christopher Stephen Lutz, *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue*, (London: Continuum, 2012), 179-181; Kruger "MacIntyre and Habermas," 7; Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," 98, 104; David A. Hoekema, "Reasons, Traditions and Virtues: Bernstein's Critique of MacIntyre," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* vol. 100, no. 4 (2017), 342-43; J. Dobson, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Aristotelian Business Ethics: A Critique," *Journal of Business Ethics,* 86, no. 1, (2009): 43-50; Martha Nussbaum, "Recoiling from Reason. Review of, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?" *New York Review of Books,* 36, no. 19, (1989): 36-41. For his rejection of conservativism see: Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 94-96; Kelvin Knight, "Revolutionary Aristotelianism," in Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight (eds.), *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism,* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). Specific to the conservativism developing out of Gadamer, see Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 292; MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* Ch15; Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight, "Introduction: Towards a Virtuous Politics," in *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism,* (eds.) Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 1; Rhodes and Lysaught, "Whose Revolution? Which Future?" 97.
[72] Hoekema, "Reasons, Traditions and Virtues: Bernstein's Critique of MacIntyre," 342-43; Knight "Guide to Further Reading," 290-291; Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit, "Introduction," in *Communitarianism and Individualism,* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-4, 9-10. For his rejection of communitarianism see: MacIntyre, After Virtue, xiv; Alasdair MacIntyre, "I'm Not A Communitarian, But…" *The Responsive Community,* 1, (1991): 91-92; Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Partial Response to my Critics," In *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre,* (eds.) John Horton and Susan Mendus, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); Kelvin Knight, "Aristotelianism versus Communitarianism," *Analyse & Kritik,* 27, (2005): 259-73; MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good," 235; Knight, "Introduction," 21; Knight "Guide to Further Reading," 290-91; Blackledge & Knight, "Introduction: Towards a Virtuous Politics," 4; MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giocanna Borradori," 265, "I am not a communitarian."
[73] See Iain L. Mangham, "MacIntyre and the Manager," *Organization*, 2, (1995); Charles M. Horvath, "Excellence v. Effectiveness: MacIntyre's Critique of Business," *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 5, (1995); Keat, "Ethics, Markets, and MacIntyre." For his rejection of management theory see: Alasdair MacIntyre, "Corporate Modernity and Moral Judgment: Are They Mutually Exclusive?" in *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century,* (eds.) K.E. Goodpaster and K. M. Sayre, (Notre Dame, 1979); Alasdair MacIntyre, "Utilitarianism and Cost-Benefit Analysis: An Essay on the Relevance of Moral Philosophy to Bureaucratic Theory" in *Values in the Electric Power Industry,* (ed.) K. M Sayre, (Notre Dame, 1977); MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 26-27, 30-32, 74-78, 85-87; Beadle, "Why Business Cannot Be a Practice.;" Ron Beadle, "The Misappropriation of MacIntyre," *Reason in Practice,* 2, no. 2 (2002): 45-54.

positions. He has also been represented as both maintaining a connection with Marx[74] and increasingly distancing himself from Marx,[75] being both a Feminist[76] and antifeminist,[77] a raging relativist[78] and an anti-postmodernist,[79] promoting a tangible political position through a politics

[74] Frederic James, "Review of After Virtue" *Social Text*, 8, (1983); Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson (eds.), *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*; Blackledge, "Utopias;" Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a Critic of Marxism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 88, no. 4, (2014): 705-724; Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre: Social Practices, Marxism and Ethical Anti-Capitalism," *Political Studies*, 57, (2009): 866-84; Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism;" Blackledge and Knight, *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*; MacIntyre "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 251, 258; James H. Stam, "'Once a Marxist…': Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism," *Socialism and Democracy*, 26, no. 3 (November, 2012): 181-82.

[75] Peter Sedgwick, "Review of After Virtue" in *The Socialist Register 1982*, (Merlin Press, 1982); Knight, "Introduction;" MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 258-59.

[76] See Annette C. Baier, *Moral Prejudices* (Harvard UP, 1994), and Sharon M. Meagher, "Histories, Herstories and Moral Traditions," *Social Theory and Practice*, 16, (1990).

[77] See a liberal feminist critique of MacIntyre by Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, (Basic Books, 1989).

[78] See Kruger, "MacIntyre and Habermas," 11-12; Hoekema "Reasons, Traditions and Virtues," 342-43. For his rejection of relativism see Kruger "MacIntyre and Habermas," 58-74; Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," 103-5; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 335, 351-353; MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 246, "the answers supplied to those questions in local terms give expression to universal claims. … Anthropologists, historians, and philosophers may sometimes be relativists, but those about whom they write never are."

[79] MacIntyre's use of 'narrative' for instance, predates it's use by many postmodernists. See Knight, "Guide to Further Reading," 281. Along with this his apparent 'relativism' differs greatly from the moral wasteland of postmodern ethics, and his work, especially around traditions, represents a continuous challenge to the failure of Nietzschean critiques to overcome capitalist practices. See Knight, "Introduction," 26-27; Porter, "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre," 46-69; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 353-54; Garcia, "Modern(ist) Moral Philosophy and MacIntyrean Critique," 103-106; MacIntyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy*, 52-73. MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," also clearly rejects Nietzschean foundations (263), the atomism of some relativist and historicist positions (264), as well as relativism. For the latter see MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," 272-73.

of community[80] and being stuck in an ivory tower;[81] and having a Catholic theology which impacts his theory (both positively and negatively).[82]

As many of these debates rage within sociology between this or that position as well, simply 'engaging with sociology' will not resolve many – if any – of the external debates of positionality regarding MacIntyre. However, the fact that such debates co-exist within sociology and the breadth of MacIntyre's work only warms the hearth of a MacIntyrean sociology, preparing such an undertaking for the debates and criticisms it will of course encounter in its process of translating itself into the terms of a neighbouring tradition of inquiry. While there are many valuable contributions sociology can offer MacIntyre and vice versa, what sociology offers to MacIntyre can largely be summarized in three aspects: 1.1) it represents a means for the *living out of his concern for practical philosophy*; 1.2) it provides a *methodological means for testing* his theories and in turn strengthening them – either through critique or confirmation; and 1.3) it provides a wider academic *community of dialogue* for MacIntyre's work. What MacIntyre offers sociology can arguably be summarized four ways: 2.1) he provides a *self-aware metatheoretical framework which allows for engagement with general theory* without necessitating the social determinism *or* the atomistic individualism of the past (and present); 2.2) he *provides a theory of method* which draws from the still-valuable contributions which elements of positivist thought provided early sociology, allowing contemporary sociologists to not be forced to choose between being 'statisticians without theory' or 'postmodernists without method;' 2.3) he provides a

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[80] MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 246-50.

[81] Ignacio Serrano del Pozo and Carolin Kreber, "Professionalization of the University and the Profession as Macintyrean Practice," *Stud Philos Educ*, 34, (2014) note the usefulness of MacIntyre's ideas in maintaining universities as places for the development of professions. Citing Graham (2005: 13), Pozo and Kreber also note how the universities of North America largely framed themselves on the universities of the Scottish Enlightenment – something MacIntyre was very focused on in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre has largely been concerned with the university and questions of universities as a space for the maintenance and expansions of different traditions of inquiry, practices, and institutions (see *After Virtue*, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and especially *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*). Because of this focus, however, despite how radical and critical it has been (see for instance his critiques of the modern university in MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57, no. 4 [2009], 347-62), he has occasionally been accused of being a conservative stuck in the ivory tower of a dead institution, despite his focus on the practical rationality of 'everyday persons' and the role such institutions as universities ought to play in maintaining the traditions which allow for a unification – rather than a disconnection – between the rationality of the university and the rationality of everyday life.

[82] Something that is both true, insofar as his religious beliefs are informed by his philosophy and vice versa, and false, in that his philosophy is largely self-sustaining sans theological backing. See MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 265-66. Although it becomes more clearly present the later one traces MacIntyre. Compare MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, with MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, for instance.

theoretical grounding for ethical considerations which many sociologists strive for in action but often don't articulate in theory;[83] and 2.4) he provides *a means for sociology to recognize itself as a living tradition of inquiry*, this helping to overcome the false dichotomy often represented in classrooms and conferences between 'the dusty old (racist, white, male)' classics, and a total re-thinking of the theoretical grounding and representation within sociology.

Points 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2 have hopefully been sufficiently explained throughout the course of this work, but it is worth briefly elaborating on the remaining points before concluding. Point 1.3 is very much a practical one, but it is important to note the stress on dialogue. This is, as has been sufficiently noted in this work, a process which is not unidirectional, and so widening the community of dialogue which engages with MacIntyre's work is not merely a practical concern for one such as myself who seeks a stronger MacIntyrean presence within sociology, but it is a necessarily honest opening up of MacIntyre's work to a wider audience, with all the positive suggestions and negative critiques this might entail. In this manner, point 1.3 is as much a case of what sociology can offer MacIntyre as it is a case of what MacIntyre can offer sociology, in a dialogical manner.

While it should be evident what MacIntyre offers in terms of ethical grounding, it is important to draw a connection between point 2.3 and point 1.1. MacIntyre's concern for practical philosophy is simultaneously an ethical, ontological and epistemological one. Looking back to our discussion of public sociology, we can see that often even within such attempts to act on similar concerns within sociology we often see an under-theorization in the epistemological and ontological realms in favour of ethics. On the other side, many of the 'ivory tower' academics which such public sociologists claim to oppose are favouring epistemology in place of ethics (and sometimes in place of ontology as well). MacIntyre offers a means to sociology as a discipline to act on its justifiable drive to engage with the wider public in a manner which is not simply an arrogant reproduction of unjust power dynamics through cemented educational institutions, without floundering in the manner demonstrated in our discussion of Bourdieu and public sociology.

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[83] 'Social justice,' for instance, is just two words if not grounded in both an account of the social and an account of justice.

Lastly, regarding point 2.4, there has been frequent debate in recent years over the role of the 'classics' within sociology. Whose theory should we teach? What extra-traditional or extra-theoretical considerations should go into the development of a course syllabus? How much pressure should be allowed from outside a discipline to impact decision-making? Many a sociologist *qua* teacher has faced these struggles, and many have responded differently. Some have attempted to entirely excise the teaching of the so-called 'founding fathers' of sociology and their ilk, under justificatory criteria such as their masculinity, their heterosexuality, their colonial European worldviews, or their so-called whiteness. These are, of course, important vectors of critique. However, they often are used as sledgehammers rather than scalpels, damaging the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of the discipline they purportedly seek to save, salvage, redeem, or what have you.

In the point of contention about the so-called whiteness of the 'founding fathers' especially one can demonstrate the manner in which such heavy-handed tactics can actually misrepresent elements of the discipline to the next generation of sociologists. For instance, it is important to note that such representations often ignore the fact that Durkheim was the son of a rabbi, and his public involvement in the Dreyfus Affair[84] demonstrated his awareness of, and opposition to, the dehumanization of any group:

> When society undergoes suffering, it feels the need to find someone whom it can hold responsible for its sickness, on whom it can avenge its misfortunes; and those against whom public opinion already discriminates are naturally designated for this role. These are the pariahs who serve as expiatory victims. What confirms me in this interpretation is the way in which the results of Dreyfus's trial was greeted in 1894. There was a surge of joy in the boulevards. People celebrated as a triumph what should have been a cause of public mourning. At least they knew whom to blame for the economic trouble and moral distress in which they lived. The trouble came from the Jews.[85]

Likewise, Marx came from a Jewish family, and his father was forced to convert to Christianity to be allowed to practice law in Prussia after he was forcibly removed from his practice after

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[84] Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (eds.), "Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)," in *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2021), 97.
[85] Durkheim, as cited by Steven Lukes, *Émile Durkheim: His Life and Work*, (London, UK: Penguin Press, 1985), 345.

Napoleon's defeat.[86] In addition to this, his lifetime of *poverty* and being a *political refugee* put him squarely in a position which would today be considered a hot topic of study for the very so-called critical sociologists who often are attempting to cut out Marx, Durkheim, and others. And this is all without mentioning the mental health problems Weber[87] or Durkheim[88] struggled with, or the egalitarianism present within Weber's marriage.[89] One could easily imagine Marx, Durkheim, and Weber checking many of the 'required boxes' of acceptance criteria for this or that grant application, or indeed professorial positions.

No one with any level of historical or theoretical reflexive awareness, including MacIntyre, would argue that adaptations ought *not* to be made, or that debates within the discipline ought *not* to be extended – indeed *these are some of the very points* MacIntyre argues essential for a healthy tradition. Such vectors of internal critique are central, but so to, from a MacIntyrean perspective, is the recognition of the *continued value* of these necessarily imperfect 'founding fathers.' Just like MacIntyre has sought to use Aristotle 'against himself' in a rejection of Aristotle's positions on slavery and women,[90] the same vital reflexivity can be functionally deployed in a sociology which is unafraid of its past and acts in a concerned manner to address legitimate critiques without fearfully *re*acting to public opinion – whether inside or outside the classroom, or the discipline.

We shall end on the MacIntyrean note that where we are now *does not in-itself represent an end*. This is not the conclusion to the larger quest of challenging and strengthening the discipline of sociology across a range of vectors through the deployment of MacIntyrean theory. No, this is another step towards a series of ends, the approach of which will necessarily result in a re-analysis of those ends, and a looking beyond them. Is this a textbook which lays out what 'MacIntyrean sociology' means? No. This is *an argument that the arguments over what a MacIntyrean sociology might mean are meaningful arguments to the tradition of sociology*. Meaningful as much as they are to the works of MacIntyre and the Thomistic-Aristotelian and Marxian traditions which he

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[86] Frederick Betz, Societal Dynamics: Understanding Social Knowledge and Wisdom, (New York, NY: Springer, 2011), 13.
[87] Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, (eds.), "Max Weber (1864-1920)," in *Classical & Contemporary Sociological Theory*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2021), 151.
[88] Appelrouth and Edles, "Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)," 98.
[89] Appelrouth and Edles, "Max Weber (1864-1920)," 151. The fact that Marianne Weber has been under-represented as an academic is not, it is important to note, the fault of Max Weber, but rather the academics who came after him.
[90] MacIntyre, "Rival Aristotles: Aristotle Against some Modern Aristotelians," 34; MacIntyre, *Marxism & Christianity*, xxviii.

inhabits. To draw one last time from MacIntyre, when discussing the question of the directedness of human life, he asks whether such directedness entails a given end, which if one should fail to reach represents a failure of a human life.[91] But to think in such a way is

> to misunderstand. To live well is to act so as to move toward achieving the best goods of which one is capable and so as to become the kind of agent capable of achieving those goods. But *there is no particular finite good the achievement of which perfects and completes one's life*. There is *always something else and something more to be attained*, whatever one's attainments. The perfection and completion of a life consists in an agent's *having persisted in moving toward and beyond the best goods of which she or he knows*.[92]

As with individual human agents, so to with traditions of inquiry. As we agents engage with and within the tradition of sociology, we ought to seek out and surpass the best goods which we can conceptualize, and in surpassing them, continue the dialogue of goods which make up the tradition.

As the history of the discipline represents, it has from its first days been dominated by debates around the question of what sociology is: what is its object of study? What does a good sociologist look like? What, indeed, is good sociology? It has engaged in the very questions which MacIntyre has pointed out are crucial to a tradition, and it is only through continuing such debates that the tradition can flourish rather than fall into a state of epistemological crisis. It is my hope that this work represents a contribution to such a discipline's flourishing, and will kindle and rekindle debates which will enable the continuation of the – sometimes irritating – ceaseless theoretical tension which remains essential to the survival of sociology as a discipline and as a tradition.

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[91] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 314-15.
[92] MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, 315, emphasis added.

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