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A COMPARATIVE CRITIQUE OF THE MORAL  
PHILOSOPHIES OF ALASDAIR MACINTYRE  
AND JOHN HARE

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Russell Hal Freeman  
December 2015

**APPROVAL SHEET**

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PHILOSOPHIES OF ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

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To Katie,  
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## PREFACE

I owe a debt to many individuals for the completion of this dissertation, and I am thankful to God for the assistance he has given me through each one. Academically, I am grateful for the discussions and readings in a worldview seminar by Dr. James Parker that introduced me to some of the ideas in this dissertation. I am also grateful for some helpful criticisms by Dr. Magnuson on a paper I wrote in his biblical ethics seminar that introduced me to natural law. I am also thankful for the way that my supervisor, Dr. Ted Cabal, pressed me hard to develop a clear thesis. He has shown much grace and patience in dealing with thoughts that are often unclear. I am also grateful for the discussions with and guidance from two fellow students, Dr. Jeremy Hatfield and Dr. Ricky Stark. Jeremy provided advice and encouragement in the early stages of this dissertation. Ricky has been a frequent source of encouragement throughout the course of my doctoral studies.

I am also grateful to God for a number of conversations with my atheistic friends, Andy Cobb and Conrad Walker. Our many informal debates were vital in my decision to apply for this Ph.D. program. I am thankful to God that Andy is no longer an atheist, and my prayer is that Conrad will come to know Jesus as Messiah as well.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to study at North Greenville College at the beginning of my academic career. The teaching of Dr. Walter Johnson awakened a love for philosophy within me that has remained for years, and he deserves much credit for anything philosophically worthwhile in this dissertation. The red ink of Dr. Pete Wilbanks taught me much about the rebukes of a friend, and without his challenging criticisms, the remainder of my academic career would have been far more difficult if not impossible. I am also thankful to Dr. Hal Freeman – my professor and my father – for his early and latter guidance. I am thankful for those involuntary Greek lessons when we

would sight-read sections of the Greek New Testament over Christmas break. At the time, I wanted to do anything but Greek. His formal and informal Greek classes would eventually help me to follow some of the linguistic arguments of Alasdair MacIntyre over ten years later. His seminar, moreover, during my senior year, awakened my love for making an argument. I am also thankful for his willingness recent years to proofread much of this dissertation. I can finally say that it has been a blessing to read, “This sentence is unclear.” The influence of all three of these men remains as I seek to be a worthy alumnus of North Greenville.

Speaking of Dr. Hal Freeman, I owe an incalculable debt to many other family members. Four individuals in particular come to mind, two of whom are my grandfathers. My paternal grandfather, Dr. Clarence Freeman, did not live to see the completion of my academic career, but he played a significant role in my decisions both to enter into vocational ministry and to remain a Southern Baptist many years ago. My maternal grandfather, Curtis Russell Simmons, provided emotional and financial support through most of my academic career. He was the strongest human being I’ve ever known, and his battles with dementia make the arguments of chapter 2 far more than theoretical for me. My mother, Pat Freeman, has had and continues to have an incalculable influence on my life. In so many ways she has been like Monica, the mother of Augustine, and my academic career would have long sputtered out without her support. Far more than anyone else, my wife, Katie Freeman, deserves credit for the completion of this project. I am eternally grateful to her and for her, and I dedicate this dissertation to her. Many times over the course of doctoral studies, I have been reminded that as all things are possible with God, nothing is possible without God. To him I owe everything, and may he receive any glory from this dissertation through Jesus Christ.

Russell Freeman

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December 2015

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Christians claim that God defines moral reality. Moral claims, ideas, and experience are, therefore, important to Christians. When moral philosophers make arguments that contradict the claims of Christianity, Christian apologists have a responsibility to respond to those arguments. When moral philosophers provide support for the claims of Christianity, apologists can critique and utilize these arguments in an overall apologetic for Christianity. Moral issues have been an important part of Christian apologetics throughout church history. In the early centuries of Christianity, pagan antagonists accused adherents of Christ as being atheistic, cannibalistic, and incestuous.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary antagonists, likewise, accuse Christianity of being a system that supports genocide, slavery, hubris, and general moral incoherence.<sup>2</sup> The task of apologetics demands that apologists give a reasoned response to such charges.

Apologists may respond in a variety of ways. One of the most obvious methods of response is to provide individual replies to specific charges. For instance, one may respond to the claim that the God of the Old Testament commits, commands, or endorses immoral actions by demonstrating that such accusations are exegetically inaccurate, historically naïve, or logically fallacious.<sup>3</sup> One may also respond to the claims

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<sup>1</sup>See Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 7.1 - 9.20, and Justin *Apologia i*, 5 – 6.

<sup>2</sup>For a variety of recent attacks against Christianity, see Simon Blackburn, *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10-14, and Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007), 97-122.

<sup>3</sup>See Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 472-80, and Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

that Christianity has fomented injustice through slavery and the crusades by providing a fuller historical understanding or by challenging the basis upon which non-Christians rest their accusations.<sup>4</sup>

One may take an approach that is offensive rather than defensive. Apologists can base their arguments on the positive historical results of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> One may also attack the metaethical foundations of non-Christian or atheistic moral views.<sup>6</sup> Some Christian thinkers assert that moral knowledge either entails theism or at least supports Christianity. This last approach is an approach that requires the assertion of moral common ground between an unbeliever and a believer. One who takes this approach assumes that some type of basic moral philosophy is available to Christians and non-Christians.

This last approach is the primary background concern of this dissertation. If an apologist attempts to support Christianity by means of common moral ground, that common ground needs to be cogent. If an apologist argues for the truth of Christianity on moral grounds with dubious assumptions, then the argument is dubious. This task of analyzing proper grounds upon which to argue for the truth of Christianity is part of the task of metapologetics, which, according to Ken Boa and Robert Bowman, deals with “foundational questions about the stance apologetics should take toward human knowledge and experience.”<sup>7</sup> Part of this task includes examining “theoretical issues

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<sup>4</sup>See David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 75-128, and Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Exposing Myths about Christianity: A Guide to Answering 145 Viral Lies and Legends* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 47-130.

<sup>5</sup>Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 146-215, and Mark T. Coppenger, *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians: Pushing Back against Cultural and Religious Critics* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011).

<sup>6</sup>For a classic example of this approach, see Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 21-142.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2006), 39.

underlying the defense of the faith.”<sup>8</sup> Regarding moral arguments, metapologetics includes, therefore, examining the common moral ground and the premises upon which apologists or moral philosophers make arguments.

Two Christian moral philosophers who have made significant contributions to contemporary moral philosophy are Alasdair MacIntyre and John Hare.<sup>9</sup> Both philosophers are Christian theists, but their approaches to a number of important metaethical issues differ significantly. For those who do see an examination of common moral ground as beneficial to moral apologists, evaluating their respective positions would contribute toward the task of metapologetics as apologists seek to construct moral apologies. Their moral philosophical systems are, therefore, worthy serious consideration by Christian apologists who are engaged in moral apologetics.

### **Thesis**

The thesis I am defending in this dissertation is that Alasdair MacIntyre’s Aristotelianism provides a more cogent basis for Christian moral philosophy than John Hare’s prescriptive realism. The superiority of MacIntyre’s Aristotelianism is evident in two primary ways. First, his system is explanatorily broader than Hare’s system. In other words, MacIntyre’s framework explains more aspects of human existence than Hare’s system. Second, MacIntyre’s Aristotelianism rests on sounder premises than Hare’s prescriptive realism, and his argument is thus stronger.

Three tasks are necessary in explaining this thesis. One must first explain what it means for a moral philosophy to be explanatorily broader than another moral philosophy. The second task is, likewise, to clarify what having stronger premises means. In order to examine the strength of the premises, one must summarize the primary

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<sup>8</sup>Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 4.

<sup>9</sup>A discussion of the specific claims and biographical information of each philosopher occurs below.

arguments of both MacIntyre and Hare. The third task in explaining the thesis, therefore, is to summarize the arguments of both MacIntyre and Hare in order to identify the two major weaknesses in Hare's system. The methodology section below contains a statement of what having a more cogent basis for Christian moral philosophy means in the context of this dissertation.

### **Explanatory Scope**

The first criterion in the thesis of this dissertation is the criterion of explanatory scope. Craig and Moreland define "explanatory scope" as the view that a superior "hypothesis will explain a wider range of data than will rival hypotheses."<sup>10</sup> Applying this criterion to a comparison of moral philosophies presupposes that the moral philosophy that implies or coincides with more aspects of human existence is epistemically stronger. Every moral theory has metaphysical, political, and even biological implications.<sup>11</sup> For instance, if one moral theorist can explain how his or her theory coheres with his own metaphysical claims, then his or her theory is stronger than if the theorist provided no explanation of the metaphysical ramifications of those moral claims. The claim of the thesis is that MacIntyre's Aristotelianism has a broader explanatory scope than John Hare's view.

For one moral philosophy to have more explanatory scope than another moral philosophy, the former system allows one to "explain a wider range of data than will rival hypotheses."<sup>12</sup> The "data" that a moral philosopher needs to explain is how his or her

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<sup>10</sup>William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 62. See also William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 233.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas Baldwin makes a similar claim when he states that "the task remains for ethics to articulate and justify a moral consciousness that is adequate to the conditions and possibilities of human life as we find it." Thomas Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy: Philosophy in English since 1945, A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 266. See also Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter Conradi (New York: Penguin, 1997), 363-64.

<sup>12</sup>Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 62. C. Behan McCullagh, upon whom Craig and Moreland appear to rely, defines explanatory scope as the requirement that a thesis "imply a

theory coincides with other aspects of human existence. The concern of explanatory scope in moral philosophy is whether that particular view leads one to expect something to be the case in areas other than the issue at hand. As Iris Murdoch claims, “a theory, whether normative or logical, is the more attractive the more it explains, the more its structure may be seen as underlying things which are familiar to us in ordinary life.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Strength of Premises**

The second criterion that the analysis of both philosophers requires is the plausibility of the premises of the primary argument of each respective philosopher. Both philosophers attempt to set forth one major argument in their most significant works. Neither Hare nor MacIntyre explicitly provide these arguments; one, therefore, has to reconstruct the arguments from the authors’ works. The claim of this thesis is that MacIntyre’s primary argument rests on stronger premises than Hare’s argument. In order to elucidate this point, a brief examination of the primary arguments of each author is necessary.

### **MacIntyre’s Primary Argument**

MacIntyre’s claim is that a moral philosophy that has an Aristotelian structure is the most plausible philosophical viewpoint available. MacIntyre’s primary argument is the following:

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greater variety of observation statements.” See C. Behan McCullagh, *Justifying Historical Descriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 19. In his application of this principle to a particular case, McCullagh alleges that one thesis explains “three kinds of evidence” as opposed to the other theses, which “explain only one kind each.” See *ibid.*, 23. One can compare McCullagh’s list and description with the lists in Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 233, and Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 62.

<sup>13</sup>Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 327. She gives two criteria for a moral philosophy. One is that the moral philosophy must commend an ideal, and the other is realism: “Human nature, opposed to the natures of other hypothetical spiritual beings, has certain discoverable attributes, and these should be suitably considered in any discussion of morality.” *Ibid.*, 363-64. She claims that her own theory covers “the whole of our mode of living and the quality of our relations with the world.” *Ibid.*, 380. Richard Mouw also claims that “a general theory of moral justification should be expected to show that the important insights of other proposed theories are capable of being absorbed into its own account.” Richard Mouw, *The God Who Commands* (1990; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 33-34.

1. Three broad models of morality are available: Aristotelian, Enlightenment, and Nietzschean.
2. The Enlightenment model is not sound.
3. The Nietzschean model is not sound.
4. Therefore, the Aristotelian model is the most plausible.

This argument is the primary claim of *After Virtue*. The second point is a summary of chapters 1-8 of this book.<sup>14</sup> The third point summarizes chapter 9,<sup>15</sup> and chapters 10 through 19 defend the conclusion.<sup>16</sup>

One can also incorporate MacIntyre's subsequent major works into this argument. Chapters 2 through 11 of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* correspond to defending the conclusion of MacIntyre's primary argument.<sup>17</sup> Chapters 12 through 17 correspond to the second step of the argument,<sup>18</sup> and chapters 18 and 19 correspond to step 3.<sup>19</sup> MacIntyre's book *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* also makes the same argument. In this book, the three versions are the "encyclopaedia," genealogist, and Thomist moral philosophies,<sup>20</sup> and each of these philosophies corresponds to the models of moral philosophy that the first point of his argument gives. The encyclopaedic tradition corresponds to an Enlightenment model. The Thomist tradition exemplifies an

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<sup>14</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 1-108.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 109-19.

<sup>16</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 120-278. Christopher Lutz divides *After Virtue* into two primary arguments: a critical argument and a constructive argument. The critical argument corresponds to points 2 and 3, and the constructive argument corresponds to the defense of the conclusion. See Christopher Lutz, *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012).

<sup>17</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 12-208.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 209-348.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 349-87. Chapters 1 and 20 introduce and summarize respectively the claims of the book and do not, therefore, fit into the categories.

<sup>20</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). Technically, what MacIntyre means by "moral enquiry" is broader than moral philosophy. *Ibid.*, 2-3. The argument of this book, however, remains consistent with the argument presented above.

Aristotelian structure, and the genealogist viewpoint is thoroughly Nietzschean. Chapters 1 and 8 correspond to the second premise in MacIntyre's overall argument.<sup>21</sup> Chapters 2 and 9 correspond to the third premise,<sup>22</sup> and chapters 3 through 7 correspond to a defense of the conclusion.<sup>23</sup> MacIntyre's fourth book since becoming an Aristotelian, *Dependent Rational Animals*, is largely a defense and articulation of his particular Aristotelianism and is, therefore, a defense of the conclusion of his argument.

This outline does not require the assumption that MacIntyre makes the same specific points; the assumption is merely that the individual arguments in each book support the larger argument. One example of the way the individual arguments differ is the difference between *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*. MacIntyre became a Thomist between the writing of each book; therefore, the latter book contains a much more positive and extensive treatment of Thomas Aquinas than the former book.<sup>24</sup> The basic structure, nonetheless, of MacIntyre's argument and conclusion is the same. In his later works, MacIntyre still argues for an Aristotelian framework against views that allegedly arise from Enlightenment or Nietzschean traditions. In his prologue to the third edition of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre notes that one reason he became a Thomist was that he came to believe "that Aquinas was in some respects a better Aristotelian than Aristotle, that not only was he an excellent interpreter of Aristotle's texts, but that he had been able to extend and deepen both Aristotle's metaphysical and his moral enquiries."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 9-31, 170-95.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 32-57, 196-215.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 58-169. The final chapter is a reflection on university education in the following form: "Since the encyclopaedia position has failed, what is the purpose of a university?" See *ibid.*, 216-235.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 164-208, with MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 165-180.

<sup>25</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, x.

## Hare's Primary Argument

John Hare's primary claim is that moral experience entails a "gap"<sup>26</sup> that orthodox Christianity<sup>27</sup> both explains and satisfies better than naturalism. As stated above, Hare does not elucidate his argument for this point explicitly. The following is a reconstruction derived from his major works:

1. Moral experience entails a gap or separation between moral norms and human capabilities.
2. If naturalism is true, then this gap makes morality unviable.<sup>28</sup>
3. If Christianity is true, then this gap does not make morality unviable.
4. Given the choice between Christianity and naturalism, Christianity must be true if morality is viable.

Hare elucidates the first point of this argument in the first two sections of *The Moral Gap*, in chapter 1 of *Why Bother Being Good?*, and in a number of articles.<sup>29</sup> He defends the second point by examining the different ways that naturalists attempt to overcome the moral gap. Naturalists attempt to address the moral gap in one of three ways. One may claim that human capabilities are more significant than Hare claims in the first step in his argument. Hare calls this method "puffing up the capacity."<sup>30</sup> The second option is to

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<sup>26</sup>John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>27</sup>Hare claims to write from the framework of "traditional Christianity." Although he does not define this phrase, Hare does claim that his primary argument is neither explicitly Catholic nor Protestant. I will use the term "orthodox Christianity" when referring to Hare's view. *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>28</sup>I use the word "unviable" because Hare's claim is more than that moral thought entails contradictory terms or rests on unsound premises if naturalism is true. Hare is concerned that morality be a worthwhile endeavor. Part of his claim is that if naturalism is true, morality is impossible. An impossible moral theory is cogent, yet unviable.

<sup>29</sup>See Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 7-98, and *idem*, *Why Bother Being Good? The Place of God in the Moral Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 13-33. See also *idem*, "Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?," in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, ed. Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 87-90; *idem*, "Ethics and Religion: Two Kantian Arguments," *Philosophical Investigations* 34 (2011): 151-59; *idem*, "Goodness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, ed. Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75-76.

<sup>30</sup>John E. Hare, "Puffing up the Capacity," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 19 (1994): 75-88.

decrease moral demands from what they appear to be. The third option is to supplement naturalistic methods of making humans more moral than they are currently. These methods sometimes include proper education or creating appropriate environments. Hare argues that these naturalistic methods are all unsuccessful.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to providing critiques for the ways that non-theistic philosophers address the moral gap, Hare supports the second step of his argument more generally. He alleges that modern moral philosophers have become more antagonistic toward theism. Many of these same contemporary philosophers, nevertheless, attempt to uphold earlier philosophies. Contemporary philosophers, however, systematically disregard the theistic elements of the earlier philosophical systems that they now attempt to set forth. Hare claims this systematic disregard by contemporary philosophers occurs with interpreters of Kant, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Leibniz, and Hume. He claims, “It is no doubt tempting, if you cannot take Christianity seriously yourself, to interpret your favorite philosophers as sharing this distaste; but it leads to a distortion of the texts.”<sup>32</sup>

This misunderstanding and misrepresentation of earlier philosophers has produced a situation in which not only are philosophers of previous ages misunderstood; present moral philosophies tend to be far more problematic. According to Hare, theism is not the sort of belief that one can take away from earlier philosophical positions without major incongruities resulting. Larry Arnhart is an example of a contemporary philosopher who has both misunderstood an earlier philosopher and set forth a more problematic viewpoint.<sup>33</sup> Arnhart attempts to utilize Aristotle without accepting theistic elements from Aristotle. Although Hare rejects Aristotelianism, he claims that Arnhart’s view is even

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<sup>31</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 99-188, and idem, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 34-53. See also idem, “Evolutionary Naturalism and Reducing the Demand of Justice,” in *Religion in the Liberal Polity*, ed. Terence Cuneo (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 74-94.

<sup>32</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 3.

<sup>33</sup>For the view that Hare criticizes, see Larry Arnhart, *Darwinian Natural Right: The Biological Ethics of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998).

more problematic than Aristotle's view since Arnhart does not posit some transcendental reality to which he can appeal. The moral framework that results is, therefore, not viable since "two natural desires conflict with no resolution by common self-interest."<sup>34</sup>

The third step of Hare's primary argument is his claim that orthodox Christianity satisfactorily addresses the moral gap. Hare most explicitly defends this thesis in the final section of *The Moral Gap*.<sup>35</sup> In this work, he shows how the Christian doctrines of sanctification, justification, and atonement overcome the moral gap. The argument in the last section of *The Moral Gap* supports no other form of theism other than Christianity. In other writings, he seeks to demonstrate the thesis that doctrines common to most theistic worldviews are necessary to rectify the problems that the moral gap creates.<sup>36</sup> For instance, one needs some type of belief in providence that ensures that the desire for happiness and the desire for virtue do not ultimately conflict, and one also needs to believe that human beings are capable of experiencing radical transformation in order to overcome innate egoism.

The thesis of this dissertation does not challenge the validity of Hare's primary argument. The conclusions follow from the premises. This dissertation, moreover, also does not contain a challenge the second and third premises of Hare's primary argument. The problem with Hare's view is that the first premise is questionable. Hare upholds a Kantian view of morality, and his argument, therefore, rests on the validity of Kantianism. This dissertation challenges that view of morality and, therefore, Hare's initial premise.

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<sup>34</sup>John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 70. For the critique of Arnhart, see *ibid.*, 65-72. For similar criticisms of other contemporary philosophers, see *ibid.*, 115-21, 176-83, and 243-48.

<sup>35</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 189-275. See also Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 54-93.

<sup>36</sup>Hare, "Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?," 93.

Hare calls his basic moral position “prescriptive realism,”<sup>37</sup> which is his attempt to explain a variety of aspects of moral experience. In this dissertation, I will argue that although prescriptive realism appears to provide his moral philosophy with explanatory scope, each apparent area of explanatory scope has significant problems. These problems, in addition to the problems with his Kantianism, make his position weaker than MacIntyre’s position.

### **Background**

Two major issues have propelled my interest in the subject of this dissertation. The first issue is that aspect of natural theology concerned with making moral arguments for the existence of God. William Lane Craig provides a typical version:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.<sup>38</sup>

Proponents of this argument and similar arguments assume a number of propositions. They assume a moral epistemology in which an unbeliever comes to encounter objective values and duties. Proponents of this argument also assume a type of moral realism. All of these propositions deal with metaethical issues of the sort that this dissertation addresses.

The so-called “Euthyphro dilemma” is an obvious objection to this argument.<sup>39</sup>

The proponent of this objection claims that one must either make God accountable to

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<sup>37</sup>John E. Hare, *God’s Call: Moral Realism, God’s Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 1-43, and John E. Hare, “Prescriptive Realism,” *Philosophia Reformata* 71 (2006): 14-30. Prescriptive realism is an attempt to combine elements of moral realism and moral expressivism. Hare catalogues admissions that moral realists have made regarding the claims of moral expressivists and admissions that moral expressivists have made regarding moral realism. He attempts to combine these admissions to form a coherent theory of his own. Hare is also a divine command theorist, but he claims that his divine command theory is not necessary to his prescriptive realism. Prescriptive realism is his metaethical position, and divine command theory is a type of prescriptive realism. See Hare, *God’s Call*, 49.

<sup>38</sup>Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 172.

<sup>39</sup>For Craig’s response to the Euthyphro dilemma, see *ibid.*, 181-83. See also Louise Antony’s

some independent standard of goodness or that the basis for goodness is simply the will of God. The proponents of this objection claim that the first horn of the dilemma is that the first option means that God is not the basis for one's concept of goodness. The second horn of the dilemma is that the latter option means that goodness is ultimately arbitrary. To respond adequately to the Euthyphro dilemma, a proponent for the moral argument for the existence of God<sup>40</sup> must provide a cogent answer to the question, "What makes these 'objective moral values and duties' good?" Answering this question requires some sort of metaethical framework.

### **The Apologetics of John Hare**

These metaethical questions led me to the writings of John Hare. Hare is a philosopher in the Reformed tradition. He did undergraduate study in the Classics at Oxford and earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton. Formerly a professor at Calvin College, he is currently the Noah Porter professor of philosophical theology at Yale University. Like MacIntyre, he has delivered the Gifford Lectures. Whereas MacIntyre has completed the bulk of his work, Hare's work is still in progress. He has been influenced by the ancient Greeks, Duns Scotus, Immanuel Kant, and "the ordinary language school of twentieth-century philosophy."<sup>41</sup> Hare's argument differs from Craig's argument in that Hare's claims are more modest. Whereas Craig concludes that "God

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utilization of the *Euthyphro* dilemma in her argument against Craig in Louise Antony, "Atheism as Perfect Piety," in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, ed. Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 67-84. Euthyphro first attempted to define piety in the *Euthyphro* 6e-7a by saying, "Well then, what is pleasing to the gods is holy, and what is not pleasing to them is unholy." Plato, "Euthyphro," trans. Lane Cooper, in Plato, *The Collected Dialogues including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 174. In "Atheism as Perfect Piety," 71, Antony claims that this view is Craig's version of divine command theory.

<sup>40</sup>The Euthyphro dilemma can also be a general argument against the moral tenability of theism. Whether or not a theist is a proponent of a moral argument for the existence of God, intellectual responsibility requires the theist to respond to the Euthyphro dilemma.

<sup>41</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 12.

exists,”<sup>42</sup> Hare concludes that “belief in Providence is rationally presupposed by the project of trying to live the moral life.”<sup>43</sup> Hare does, nonetheless, provide an argument (given above) to support the truth of Christianity. As an apologist, he thus seeks to provide a substantial argument that supports the truth of theism in general and Christianity in particular.

### **The Importance of Alasdair MacIntyre**

The second major issue was the importance of the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre. The assigned reading in a seminar on worldviews by Dr. James Parker included *Worldview: The History of a Concept* by David Naugle.<sup>44</sup> Naugle claims that MacIntyre “more than any other contemporary thinker”<sup>45</sup> has made a compelling case that narrative is essential for understanding humanity. Following MacIntyre, Naugle claims that one defines rationality according to one’s worldview. After he compares the views of rationality in a primitive African tribe, Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 1-4, and Enlightenment foundationalism, Naugle concludes, “These very differences over the African Azande, the gospel, and foundationalism make one thing seem patently clear: rationality is context- and commitment-dependent. What a person deems to be rational and irrational appears to be a function of the reasoner’s worldview.”<sup>46</sup>

The combination of these two issues forms the impetus of this dissertation. In the remainder of this section, I will seek to show the importance of comparing

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<sup>42</sup>Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 172.

<sup>43</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 288.

<sup>44</sup>David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 300-301. MacIntyre claims at the conclusion of *Whose Justice?*, 389, that “it has become evident that conceptions of justice and of practical rationality generally and characteristically confront us as closely related aspects of some larger, more or less well-articulated, overall view of human life and of its place in nature.” This “overall view” is a tradition according to MacIntyre. The overlap with Naugle’s concept of worldview is evident.

<sup>46</sup>Naugle, *Worldview*, 306.

MacIntyre's moral philosophy with John Hare's moral philosophy in two broad steps. The first step is to provide two reasons why MacIntyre's philosophical work is important for proponents of moral apologetics. First, MacIntyre is widely seen to be a major contemporary moral philosopher. On that basis alone, those who are engaged in moral apologetics must take his moral philosophy into account. Second, a prima facie incompatibility exists between MacIntyre's moral philosophy and recent moral arguments for the existence of God. The second step in showing the importance of the topic of this dissertation is to show why Hare is an appropriate test case for a comparison with MacIntyre.

**MacIntyre as a moral philosopher.** The importance of MacIntyre's work in moral philosophy is one reason his work is important for those engaged in moral apologetics. In order to see the importance of his philosophy, a brief overview of his academic background is helpful. His corpus of published work spans six decades. During this time, he has written from a variety of perspectives. He began his career as both a Christian and Marxist, and his first book is on the relationship between Christianity and Marxism.<sup>47</sup> Afterwards, he relinquished first Christianity and then Marxism. During the writing of *After Virtue*, he became an Aristotelian. During the writing of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, he became a Catholic Christian in the tradition of Thomism. MacIntyre retired as the Rev. John A. O'Brien Senior Research Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, and he is currently Senior Research Fellow at the London Metropolitan University. He has taught at a number of universities including Oxford University, Princeton University, Duke University, and Vanderbilt University.

Philosophers, theologians, and ethicists recognize MacIntyre both for his criticisms of modern moral philosophy and for his innovative reconstruction of

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<sup>47</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism: An Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1953).

Aristotelianism. Like Elizabeth Anscombe before him,<sup>48</sup> MacIntyre has earned a reputation as one who has provided a sweeping critique and rejection of modern moral philosophical ways of thought. Unlike Anscombe, however, MacIntyre has promulgated a constructive yet controversial system. Although his followers sometimes call his system “revolutionary Aristotelianism,”<sup>49</sup> philosophers, theologians, and ethicists have utilized his material in a variety of ways. They label him as a critic of modern morality,<sup>50</sup> a virtue ethicist,<sup>51</sup> a communitarian,<sup>52</sup> a narrative ethicist,<sup>53</sup> or a simply as guide for the church.<sup>54</sup> Stanley Hauerwas notes that because of the extent of his critique of modernity and his positive reconstruction of Aristotelianism, MacIntyre is “one of the most important

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<sup>48</sup>For a classic critique of modern moral philosophy not unlike MacIntyre’s criticism, see Elizabeth Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy,” *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1-19. For the connection between MacIntyre and Anscombe, see David Solomon, “Elizabeth Anscombe’s ‘Modern Moral Philosophy’: Fifty Years Later,” *Christian Bioethics* 14:110-11. Both the later MacIntyre and Anscombe come from a Roman Catholic framework, but MacIntyre notes that Anscombe was not a Thomist. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield), 162.

<sup>49</sup>Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight, eds., *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre’s Revolutionary Aristotelianism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).

<sup>50</sup>Charles Taylor, who is also a notable critic of modernity, claims that *After Virtue* contains an “extraordinarily rich analysis of the modern predicament.” Charles Taylor, “Justice after Virtue,” in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 16. See also Michael Banner, *Christian Ethics: A Brief History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 4-5, and Blackburn, *Being Good*, 148. Blackburn and Solomon, “Elizabeth Anscombe’s ‘Modern Moral Philosophy,’” 110-11, place MacIntyre in the same category as Bernard Williams. See Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

<sup>51</sup>Thomas Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy*, 264-65, and Blackburn, *Being Good*, 151. These categories are obviously not mutually exclusive, but Blackburn sees MacIntyre’s work as primarily critical.

<sup>52</sup>Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 20. For MacIntyre’s rejection of communitarianism, see Alasdair MacIntyre, “Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good,” in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 243-46.

<sup>53</sup>Craig G. Bartholomew, introduction to *A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically: A Dialogue with Oliver O’Donovan*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 15.

<sup>54</sup>Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: Lessons for the Church from MacIntyre’s After Virtue* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), and Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), xxv.

philosophers of our time.”<sup>55</sup> In a major survey of professional philosophers, *After Virtue* tied with *Pragmatism* by William James as the eighteenth most important philosophical book in twentieth century.<sup>56</sup>

When Christian apologists make arguments for the truth of Christian, engagement with some of the most important contemporary claims of the field in which they are making their claims is vital. A proponent of the cosmological argument for the existence of God, for example, must deal with contemporary claims of cosmologists. Proponents of design arguments from human biology, likewise, must respond to recent work in evolutionary biology. Upholders of moral arguments for the existence of God or the truth of Christianity must also engage with the work of a philosopher with the stature and influence that MacIntyre has.

**MacIntyre and intuitionism.** The second reason why MacIntyre’s work is important for moral apologetics is because his specific claims challenge a number of recent formulations of moral arguments for the existence of God. In order to see this point, one may compare MacIntyre’s criticisms of the intuitionism of G. E. Moore with moral arguments for the existence of God. In general, MacIntyre claims that moral language largely bears no meaning in contemporary society because this language arises from conflicting viewpoints that most people<sup>57</sup> no longer espouse. Contemporary moral language only reflects the fragments of earlier systems,<sup>58</sup> which modernity unraveled.

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<sup>55</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, “The Virtues of Alasdair MacIntyre,” *First Things* (October 2007): 35.

<sup>56</sup>Douglas P. Lackey, “What Are the Modern Classics? The Baruch Poll of Great Philosophy in the Twentieth Century,” *The Philosophical Forum* 30 (1999): 331.

<sup>57</sup>MacIntyre includes both philosophers and non-philosophers, which he calls “plain persons.” For the relationship between the two groups and the use of this term, see MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 10.

<sup>58</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1-5.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre's criticism of Moore's moral philosophy is a vital aspect of his argument against the tenability of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment moral philosophies.<sup>59</sup> Moore claims that the concept of goodness is an ultimately basic concept that one cannot further reduce or even define: "If I am asked, 'What is good?' my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter."<sup>60</sup> One thus perceives or intuits goodness in a way similar to how one perceives the color yellow: "My point is that 'good' is a simple notion, just as 'yellow' is a simple notion; that, just as you cannot, by any manner of means, explain to anyone who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is."<sup>61</sup>

In his book, *A Short History of Ethics*,<sup>62</sup> MacIntyre gives two major objections to Moore's intuitionism. He claims that Moore's account of goodness appears arbitrary. For Moore to defend his view against the claim that his moral philosophy is reducible to emotion or arbitrary preference, his account of goodness requires support in two major ways. First, Moore needs to supply universally recognized examples of goodness. In the case of the color yellow, one may point to examples like pencils, school buses, and daffodils to support a claim that the color yellow exists. If Moore is to argue that an indefinable concept like goodness exists, he needs to be able to point to examples that people universally recognize for the analogy to hold, which Moore does not do. Second, Moore needs to provide the necessary conditions that allow one to recognize goodness. Even if one cannot define the color yellow, one can point to conditions that are necessary

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<sup>59</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 14-19.

<sup>60</sup>G. E. Moore, "The Indefinability of Good," in *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy: Readings from Classical and Contemporary Sources*, ed. Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 322.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>62</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 249-57. In most cases, I will deal with MacIntyre's later works since his Aristotelianism is a major concern of this dissertation. Since the criticism of Moore in *After Virtue* is briefer than MacIntyre's earlier criticism in *Short History* and since MacIntyre makes essentially the same point in both works, I will rely on his criticism of Moore in *A Short History of Ethics*.

to perceive color: a functioning eye, light, and the presence of an object that reflects yellow light. Moore does not provide these necessary conditions.

The second area of support that Moore's intuitionism requires is a basis for practical rationality.<sup>63</sup> In other words, MacIntyre claims that Moore does not demonstrate how performing a good deed is not arbitrary. Moral action appears to have an "overriding"<sup>64</sup> quality that one needs to defend in order to preserve the viability of morality. Without defending the rationality of moral behavior, a possible conflict between rational behavior and moral behavior exists. Moore's theory provides no appeal to people who prefer pleasure or malice over goodness and thus does not preserve the overriding quality of morality.<sup>65</sup> By neglecting to account for moral overridingness, Moore's moral philosophy marginalizes goodness in the lives of most human beings.<sup>66</sup> MacIntyre then claims that the intuition of the good to which Moore appeals is, in his early twentieth-century context, reducible to emotion. The emotivists were thus correct in their criticisms of Moore.<sup>67</sup> Moore's view of goodness is much like the Polynesian concept of taboo; both ideas are intellectually vacuous yet culturally powerful.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Practical rationality is, according to MacIntyre, what enables a person to answer the question, "What makes an action intelligible?" See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 125.

<sup>64</sup>For the concept of "moral overridingness," see C. Stephen Layman, "A Moral Argument for the Existence of God," in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough?*, 49-65, and Sarah Stroud, "Moral Overridingness and Moral Theory," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (1998): 170-89.

<sup>65</sup>MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 252.

<sup>66</sup>MacIntyre writes, "The values which Moore exalts belong to the realm of private rather than public life; and, supremely important as they are, they exclude all the values connected with intellectual inquiry and with work." *Ibid.*, 256. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 15.

<sup>67</sup>For MacIntyre's criticisms of emotivism as a philosophical theory, see MacIntyre, *Short History*, 259-60, and MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 18-21.

<sup>68</sup>MacIntyre first equates H. A. Pritchard's view with the concept of taboo. Pritchard, like Moore, was an intuitionist. MacIntyre later applies this criticism to modern moral philosophy in general. For two earlier criticisms, see MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 86-88, and *idem*, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (1971; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 157-72. For his later criticism, see *idem*, *After Virtue*, 110-13. For Pritchard's early intuitionism, see H. A. Pritchard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?," *Mind* 21 (1912): 21-37

Against Moore's intuitionism, MacIntyre proposes a contemporary version of Aristotelianism. His Aristotelianism addresses the problems he poses for the intuitionists. MacIntyre's view unites moral concepts with practical rationality. In this view, rational behavior and moral behavior do not conflict; a moral decision is always a rational decision for MacIntyre. Moral behavior, moreover, requires moral education that includes learning to curb one's passions, gaining life experience, acquiring the ability to apply rules to actions, developing proper dispositions, and grasping the nature of justice.<sup>69</sup> MacIntyre also provides an account of goodness in which goodness is not a property that supervenes upon certain actions and that one discerns through moral intuition; human goods are the ends that humans seek either successfully or unsuccessfully.<sup>70</sup>

**Intuitionism and moral arguments.** To see how MacIntyre's claims influence recent formulations of moral arguments for the existence of God, one may compare MacIntyre's criticisms of G. E. Moore with the claims of three proponents of moral arguments: William Lane Craig, Mark Linville, and Paul Copan.<sup>71</sup> Craig, Linville, and Copan all explicitly or implicitly rest premises of their arguments on intuiting moral values. In his defense of moral objectivity in the second premise of his argument, Craig writes,

Actions like rape, torture, child abuse, and brutality aren't just socially unacceptable behavior – they're moral abominations. By the same token, love, generosity, equality, and self-sacrifice are really good. People who fail to see this are just morally handicapped, and there is no reason to allow their impaired vision to call into question what we see clearly.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 114-15.

<sup>70</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 66-67. Ultimately, MacIntyre unites goodness with human flourishing.

<sup>71</sup>For each of these respective formulations, see Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 172-83; Mark D. Linville, "The Moral Argument," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, ed. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 391-448; and Paul Copan, "Hume and the Moral Argument," in *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*, ed. James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 200-225.

<sup>72</sup>Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 181.

Craig claims that moral perception functions much like sensory perception. A person either “sees” or “fails to see” moral values.<sup>73</sup> In his defense of the moral argument against the moral theory of David Hume, Paul Copan, likewise, bases his argument on intuitions: “We intuitively – noninferentially, prephilosophically – recognize the existence of some basic moral values and first principles of morality that arise naturally out of our own experience.”<sup>74</sup>

Mark Linville gives two moral arguments in his article in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Although the first moral argument does not explicitly rest on moral intuitions, the first premise of Linville’s argument is simply that “moral facts”<sup>75</sup> exist. He provides no mechanism for recognizing these facts. Linville acknowledges that moral antirealists would not hold to the truth of that premise, but he states that he is simply “more interested”<sup>76</sup> in realists. In his second argument in the same article, Linville uses language similar to Copan. He argues from “our deep-seated moral convictions”<sup>77</sup> for the truth of theism. The Christian doctrine of the *imago Dei* best explains “the sorts of pre-theoretical moral beliefs to which we typically appeal in reflective equilibrium.”<sup>78</sup> That these beliefs are “pre-theoretical” indicates that his argument rests on intuitions. One can assume also, therefore, that the mechanism that one uses to recognize moral facts in the first argument is, likewise, intuition.

In order to see how MacIntyre’s arguments against Moore’s intuitionism relate to these three moral arguments for the existence of God, one may substitute “colors” for

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<sup>73</sup>Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 179. He writes, “I take it that in moral experience we do apprehend a realm of objective moral values and duties, just as in sensory experience we do apprehend a realm of objectively existing physical objects.”

<sup>74</sup>Copan, “Hume and the Moral Argument,” 213-14.

<sup>75</sup>Linville, “The Moral Argument,” 394.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 433.

“moral values” in the above statements or “the color yellow” for specific acts. To reword Craig’s statement above, one may say, “By the same token, school buses, sunflowers, number 2 pencils, lemons, and squashes are really yellow. People who fail to see this are just visually handicapped, and there is no reason to allow their impaired vision to call into question what we see clearly.”<sup>79</sup> One may, likewise, reword Copan’s premise: “We intuitively – noninferentially, prephilosophically – recognize the existence of some basic colors that arise naturally out of our own experience.”<sup>80</sup>

The revised statements are patently true. A philosophical argument is almost always fruitless in overcoming disagreements concerning colors. The parallels between these premises and statements about basic perceptions also show how similar Moore’s intuitionism is to the premises in the above moral arguments. A defender of these versions of the moral argument needs to show that these criticisms of Moore by MacIntyre do not apply to the premises of the three forms of the moral argument for the existence of God provided above. MacIntyre’s first criticism against Moore is that a defender of the reliability of moral perception through intuition needs to show that significant moral agreement exists in order to make a distinction between moral claims and emotional attraction or revulsion. The second criticism is that intuitionism does not produce practical rationality. MacIntyre’s objections to Moore challenge the moral frameworks that undergird the premises of each of the three moral arguments.

The fact that MacIntyre presents solutions to the problems he raises for Moore and, by implication, recent defenders of theistic moral arguments does not mean that MacIntyre’s account is necessarily superior to other accounts. What this brief comparison, however, does demonstrate is that a *prima facie* inconsistency exists between

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<sup>79</sup>Cf. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 181.

<sup>80</sup>Cf. Copan, “Hume and the Moral Argument,” 213-14. One could reword Linville’s statements in a similar manner.

MacIntyre's moral philosophy and recent moral arguments. This apparent inconsistency means, furthermore, that if defenders of moral arguments are to take MacIntyre's moral philosophy into account, further work is necessary. One needs a test case to compare MacIntyre's overall philosophy with a proponent of the moral argument for God's existence.

**Hare as a test case.** The work of John Hare provides a test case for comparing the claims of MacIntyre to moral apologetics. As the outline of Hare's primary argument given above demonstrates, Hare is making a moral argument for the truth of theism and Christianity. Although his argument is not identical to the format of the arguments of Craig, Copan, or Linville, he is arguing along the same lines. Hare's moral philosophy, however, is a significant system that contains a number of points of comparison with MacIntyre's moral philosophy, and these points of comparison allow one to see how MacIntyre's moral philosophy compares with the moral framework of someone engaged in moral apologetics.

The first major point of comparison is in the approach to philosophy that both MacIntyre and Hare take. MacIntyre contrasts his later work with his earlier book, *A Short History of Ethics*: "From 1977 onwards I have been engaged in a single project to which *After Virtue*, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* are central, a project described by one of my colleagues as that of writing *An Interminably Long History of Ethics*."<sup>81</sup> Like the proponents of the moral argument above, Hare attempts to argue from agreed upon premises in order to demonstrate the cogency of theism (or Christianity), but unlike the previously mentioned writers, Hare deals significantly with the history of philosophy. MacIntyre and Hare both warn readers against vague and general critiques of various views. In order to criticize a view

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<sup>81</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, 269.

responsibly, one must respond to an individual thinker and place oneself accountable to particular texts.<sup>82</sup> In an article on the relationship of religion to morality, Hare seeks to demonstrate the intricate relationship between moral claims and the history of moral philosophy: “The purpose of proceeding historically is to substantiate the claim that morality and religion have been inseparable until very recently, and that our moral vocabulary is still deeply infused with this history.”<sup>83</sup>

Another point of comparison is that both MacIntyre and Hare partly rely on the work of medieval philosophers in constructing their own views. MacIntyre considers himself a Thomist in the natural law tradition while Hare considers himself a proponent of divine command theory in the Scotist and Calvinist traditions. The most significant difference in the respective moral philosophies of each thinker is how each has dealt repeatedly with the philosophies of Aristotle and Kant. Two additional points of comparison, therefore, are the ways in which Hare and MacIntyre respond to Aristotle and Kant. MacIntyre writes as an explicit Aristotelian, but Hare explicitly rejects Aristotelianism.<sup>84</sup> Conversely, Hare calls himself a Kantian, but MacIntyre alleges that Kant, along with the entire tradition of Enlightenment, failed necessarily. Hare responds to MacIntyre by claiming that “Kant has been demonized as the presiding genius of modernism, or ‘the enlightenment project’, which has in turn been seen as the Babylon

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<sup>82</sup>MacIntyre *Whose Justice?*, 10, claims that “the concept of tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive rational enquiry cannot be elucidated apart from its exemplifications, something which I take to be true of all concepts, but something which it is more important not to neglect in some cases than in others.” In *God and Morality*, 2, Hare notes that the benefit of focusing on one theorist as opposed to a theory in general is the following: “We can hold the first kind of answer accountable to the evidence of the texts. But the jargon terms ending in ‘ist’ are free-floating and disastrously vague.”

<sup>83</sup>John E. Hare, “Religion and Morality,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed May 7, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/religion-morality/>.

<sup>84</sup>For some of Hare’s lesser known work, see John E. Hare, “Aristotle’s Theories of Essence” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1975); idem, “Ελευθεριότητα in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Ancient Philosophy* 8 (1988): 19-32; and idem, “Aristotle and the Definition of Natural Things,” *Phronesis* 24 (1979): 168–79.

where the remnants of the true church have been forced into exile. But it falsifies his views to make him into this kind of symbol.”<sup>85</sup>

In summary, the fact that MacIntyre is a major moral philosopher should compel proponents of moral arguments for the existence of God to respond to his claims at some level. The fact that a *prima facie* inconsistency exists between MacIntyre’s moral philosophy and the formulations of the moral argument by three prominent Christian apologists adds greater import to examining the implications of his views for moral apologetics. The numerous ways that MacIntyre’s work and Hare’s work intersect, moreover, make Hare an ideal candidate for comparison in examining the implications of MacIntyre’s philosophy.

### **Methodology**

The focus of this dissertation is upon the philosophical arguments of MacIntyre and Hare. Since an explanation of the criteria relevant to this dissertation occurs above, this section contains an explanation of what having a more cogent basis for Christian moral philosophy means for the purpose of this dissertation. The word *philosophy* often differs significantly in meaning between different individuals. After defining for the purposes of this dissertation cogency and philosophy, an explanation of how the thesis proceeds then occurs. This section concludes with a statement of limitations.

### **A More Cogent Moral Philosophy**

As the thesis states, the claim of this dissertation is that MacIntyre provides a superior “basis for Christian moral philosophy.” What this statement means depends on how one defines philosophy and how one defines the relationship between theology and philosophy. A definition of these terms is thus necessary. Boa and Bowman note that

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<sup>85</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 88. For the phrase, “Enlightenment Project,” see the title of chap. 5 of MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 51: “Why the Enlightenment Project of Justifying Morality Had to Fail.”

often for Reformed theologians and philosophers, philosophy must have an explicitly Christian basis or set of presuppositions.<sup>86</sup> In the views of these thinkers, a line of demarcation between philosophy and theology is either vague or permeable. For others, philosophy is simply an activity of critical thought and a second-order discipline that does not result in truth apart from the work of other academic disciplines.<sup>87</sup>

For even others, philosophy does not presuppose the truth of divine revelation or Christianity and often functions as a prolegomenon to theology.<sup>88</sup> This latter view is the assumption behind the thesis of this dissertation. The assumption is that one can arrive at a limited number of substantive (as opposed to methodological) moral truths apart from special revelation.<sup>89</sup> As is evident from the summary of their primary arguments, this assumption is one that both Hare and MacIntyre share. Hare's primary argument does not require that one be a Christian in order to be aware of the moral gap, and MacIntyre's argument requires that Aristotle has produced in many ways a paradigmatic framework for moral thought.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 265.

<sup>87</sup>Some see philosophy as primarily a critical activity. Simon Blackburn defines this sense of philosophy as a discipline "that seeks not so much to solve historical, physical, or legal questions, as to study the concepts that structure such thinking, and to lay bare their foundations and presuppositions." See Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. "Philosophy." Millard Erickson, likewise, claims that philosophy is primarily "an activity, philosophizing rather than as a body of truths. It is potentially capable of functioning from any perspective and with any set of data." See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 59.

<sup>88</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 79. This view is, according to Boa and Bowman, consistent with classical apologetics. The assumption is also consistent with Boa and Bowman's integrative approach. See Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 496.

<sup>89</sup>See J. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 180-81, for a list of five moral truths available through general revelation. One need not agree with natural law theory for these truths to be accessible to unbelievers.

<sup>90</sup>Nonetheless, one can hold to a division between philosophy and theology without holding to the sort of autonomous view of philosophy that Frederick Copleston gives in his description of how Thomism is modern in the second volume of his history: "As a system of self-sufficient philosophy Thomism can enter into competition and discussion with other philosophies, because it can prescind from dogmatic theology altogether, whereas a Christian philosophy of the Bonaventurian type can hardly do so." Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, *Medieval Philosophy: From Augustine to Duns Scotus* (1962; repr., New York: Doubleday, 1993), 558. For an approach in which one neither "prescinds" from dogmatic theology nor does one see Christian truths as unquestioned axioms, see Paul Helm, *Faith and Understanding*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 22-25.

Christian moral philosophy, in this view, differs from Christian ethics. Moral philosophers, in this view, provide much less specific moral guidance than Christian ethicists do. To claim, therefore, that MacIntyre's view is a superior basis for Christian moral philosophy is not to say that his view provides sounder guidelines for Christian ethics. Craig and Moreland provide an example of the view of moral philosophy consistent with the thesis of this dissertation. They claim that in Amos 1 and 2 the prophet Amos "appealed to general principles of moral reasoning in criticizing the immorality of pagan nations. . . . Arguments such as this utilize natural moral law and general philosophical principles of moral reasoning."<sup>91</sup> Whether or not they have correctly exegeted Amos, the claim of the thesis is that both Hare and MacIntyre specifically, and moral philosophers more generally, deal with what Craig and Moreland call "general philosophical principles of moral reasoning." The argument of the dissertation is that MacIntyre's claims are more cogent.

A further issue one needs to address is in what sense a moral philosophy is the "basis" of a Christian moral philosophy. Whereas an ontological basis for Christian moral philosophy would be the existence of the Christian God,<sup>92</sup> the sense used in this dissertation is that a moral philosophy provides an epistemological basis for a Christian moral philosophy. For believers who are examining moral philosophies upon which to seek justification or verification for their views or for non-Christians who are examining the moral philosophies of Christians, MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is a more philosophically robust starting point than Hare's prescriptive realism.

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<sup>91</sup>Craig and Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations*, 15.

<sup>92</sup>As Arthur Holmes notes, the adherent of the Apostles' Creed "confesses a living God; no detached spectator on the world and its fate, God is the leading actor. All powerful, he retains and exercises the initiative. This is the most basic theme in a Christian world view." For an adherent of the Apostles' Creed, the being and action of God ground moral thought. See Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), 57.

## **The Order of Defending the Thesis**

The defense of the thesis of this dissertation occurs in a loosely historical progression. As noted in the background section above, both Hare and MacIntyre see their own positive constructions as responses to earlier figures in the history of philosophy. MacIntyre, moreover, sees his own work as an attempt to recontextualize an older tradition. Since MacIntyre's most significant works appear earlier than Hare's most significant writings and since MacIntyre relies on authors that are older than authors upon which Hare relies, an analysis of MacIntyre's system occurs first. The questions that drive this portion of the dissertation have to do with what sense MacIntyre's Aristotelianism provides his moral philosophy with explanatory scope. The first issues arise specifically from his Aristotelianism, and two additional issues come from the Thomistic strains of his thought.

The focus then changes to Hare's prescriptive realism. Hare's appropriation of Scotus is a primary concern in this section. The reason the methodology of this dissertation is only "loosely" historical is because Hare's appropriation of Plato, Aristotle, and Iris Murdoch in defending his prescriptive realism also occur at this point. The primary purpose of this section is to demonstrate that although his theory appears to provide a number of areas of explanatory scope, none of these issues actually gives his moral philosophy significant explanatory scope. The dissertation then contains overviews of the opposite responses to Kant from Hare and MacIntyre. Both Hare and MacIntyre have opposite and mutually contradictory responses to Kant. Their responses to Kant, moreover, reveal the tenuous nature of the premises of Hare's major argument. Hare's failure, moreover, reveals the strength of MacIntyre's argument.

## **Limitations**

A number of issues are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Due to the long and prolific academic career of Alasdair MacIntyre, the focus of this dissertation is primarily on his works that he wrote after becoming an Aristotelian. These writings

include the books and articles he has published since the first edition of *After Virtue* appeared in 1981. His earlier writings, however, do receive treatment in this dissertation, but they will only appear in sections in which MacIntyre's work since becoming an Aristotelian relies on arguments he made before becoming an Aristotelian. Due to the evolution of Hare's ethical thought, his later works will also receive priority.<sup>93</sup> As in the case of MacIntyre, however, to the extent that Hare's earlier writings illuminate his overall position, those writings receive attention.

### **Summary of the Remaining Chapters**

Chapter 2 surveys and provides an analysis of the Aristotelianism of Alasdair MacIntyre. The purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate the broad explanatory scope of MacIntyre's moral philosophy and the strength of MacIntyre's initial premise by surveying in what sense his philosophy is Aristotelian. Teleology is the most important concept for MacIntyre since this concept unifies the other concepts. Chapter 3 further elucidates MacIntyre's Aristotelianism, but this chapter examines the way in which MacIntyre's Thomism affects his moral philosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Thomistic nature of MacIntyre's view broadens his explanatory scope in his conceptions of vulnerability and tradition. The chapter concludes with a response to major criticisms of MacIntyre.

In chapter 4, the focus changes to the work of Hare. His prescriptive realism appears to provide him with explanatory scope, but upon further examination, none of the issues treated provide his moral philosophy with explanatory scope. The most important author for these aspects of Hare's prescriptive realism is Duns Scotus, but the influence

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<sup>93</sup>For example, in *The Moral Gap*, the influence of the philosophy of Duns Scotus does not appear. Moreover, in *Ethics and International Affairs*, which Hare co-authored with Carey B. Joynt, Kant does not appear in the index. See John E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 196n14. Both Kant and Scotus are very important in Hare's later work.

of Plato, Aristotle, and Iris Murdoch on Hare's view is also a factor in analyzing his prescriptive realism.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the Kantian aspects of Hare's philosophy. Both through the work of Kant and through the way R. M. Hare appropriates Kant, four issues are essential in Hare's view of morality: universality, prescriptivity, overridingness, and ideal observer theory. This chapter serves as a prolegomenon for chapter 6, which gives an examination of MacIntyre's criticisms of Kant's moral philosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to survey MacIntyre's view of the Enlightenment in order to see if the first premise of his argument is plausible and to see if Hare is able to provide a moral philosophy that withstands these criticisms. The argument of this chapter is that MacIntyre's criticisms of Kant's view of the self, universality, and moral formalism greatly reduce the plausibility of Hare's Kantianism.

Chapter 7 provides an exploration of the nature of an apologetic consistent with MacIntyre's Aristotelianism. Although some tensions exist within MacIntyre's statements regarding apologetics, one may conclude that such an apologetic would be similar to Reformed epistemology in a number of ways. A major way in which this type of apologetic would differ from Plantinga's approach is that one would argue on Aristotelian bases for the truth of Christianity.

## CHAPTER 2

### A MODERN ARISTOTELIAN

Before one determines the extent of explanatory scope that Alasdair MacIntyre provides through his Aristotelian framework, an important preliminary issue to address is in what sense MacIntyre is an Aristotelian. This chapter, therefore, first places MacIntyre's moral philosophy within the context of contemporary Aristotelianism and makes the claim that the most significant aspect of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is his teleological view of humanity. With this understanding, the chapter then claims that MacIntyre's moral philosophy exhibits a broad range of explanatory scope through his claims in three areas: philosophical anthropology, political theory, and metaethics.

#### **Introduction to Contemporary Aristotelianism**

Aristotelianism has taken so many forms throughout the centuries that to call someone an Aristotelian can have a multitude of meanings. Martha Nussbaum claims, for example, that Aristotle has been a "central inspiration"<sup>1</sup> for thinkers as diverse as Jacques Maritain, John Finnis, Germain Grisez, Robert George, Alasdair MacIntyre, Mihailo Marcovic, T. H. Green, and Ernest Baker. This list includes those who accept and those who reject natural law theory.<sup>2</sup> Nussbaum herself adheres to "a Rawlsian type of political liberalism,"<sup>3</sup> but a major aspect of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is his rejection of the

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<sup>1</sup>Nussbaum also considers Aristotle as a major influence in her own philosophy. See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilities: A Response to Antony, Arneson, Charlesworth, and Mulgan," *Ethics* 111 (2000): 104-5. Timothy O'Connor also mentions a growing Aristotelian influence in contemporary metaphysics. See Timothy O'Connor, "Theism and Ultimate Explanation: The Necessary Shape of Contingency," *Philosophia Christi* 12 (2010): 266.

<sup>2</sup>For example, see the exchange in John Finnis and Martha Nussbaum, "Is Homosexual Conduct Wrong? A Philosophical Exchange," *New Republic* 209, no. 20 (November 15, 1993): 12-13.

<sup>3</sup>Nussbaum, "Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilities," 102.

political liberalism of Rawls and others.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary Aristotelians also disagree in their interpretations of Aristotle. Some claim that his writings support the theory that human beings have one overarching end that supersedes all others, and others reject that his writings support such a view.<sup>5</sup>

To survey contemporary Aristotelianism is to survey a multitude of mutually conflicting moral viewpoints. Since such a significant disparity exists between Aristotelians, one must examine the way or ways in which a thinker is an Aristotelian. In what sense MacIntyre is an Aristotelian varies from the ways that Nussbaum, Broadie, or Kraut are Aristotelians. Some thinkers appropriate Aristotle in a piecemeal fashion, and others adopt a more comprehensive framework.

### **MacIntyre and Aristotle**

For MacIntyre, Aristotle is not merely one figure to which he professes allegiance as much as one who serves as a paradigm for an entire structure of moral philosophy. MacIntyre claims, moreover, that this structure is broad enough for thinkers of various worldviews and religions, and he notes how certain polytheists, Christians, Muslims, and Jews have accepted an Aristotelian framework at some point. Aristotle's particular importance, according to MacIntyre, lies in "the fact that Aristotelianism is *philosophically* the most powerful of premodern modes of moral thought. If a premodern view of morals and politics is to be vindicated against modernity, it will be in *something like* Aristotelian terms or not at all."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 244-55, and Alasdair MacIntyre, "Political and Philosophical Epilogue: A View of *The Poverty of Liberalism* by Robert Paul Wolff," in Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (1971; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 280-84.

<sup>5</sup>See Richard Kraut, "In Defense of the Grand End," *Ethics* 103 (1993): 361-74, and Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>6</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 118. Italics in original.

Two features of the way MacIntyre describes Aristotelianism are important for this dissertation. First, MacIntyre does not see himself primarily as an Aristotelian in the sense that Aristotelianism is one option that contrasts with, for example, Platonism, utilitarianism, or Kantianism. He sees himself, rather, as an adherent of a moral perspective that is largely premodern and that Aristotle set forth in the most philosophically coherent way. He sometimes calls this perspective, “the tradition of the virtues.”<sup>7</sup> This view allows him to claim that Plato and Aristotle were two parts of the same project.<sup>8</sup> Second, for MacIntyre, Aristotelianism and modernity are two mutually exclusive viewpoints. Within MacIntyre’s categories, Nussbaum’s claim to be a politically liberal Aristotelian is logically equivalent to a square circle.

### **Teleology and Moral Philosophy**

The central aspect of MacIntyre’s Aristotelianism is teleology. For Aristotle, teleology pervades both nature and human activity.<sup>9</sup> Humans are by nature teleological creatures, and every human endeavor, therefore, is an attempt to accomplish some end. The craft of politics (which includes ethics) is an attempt both to discern the nature of the highest end and to help accomplish that end.<sup>10</sup> MacIntyre, likewise, claims that humans are essentially functional or “goal-directed.”<sup>11</sup> Directing themselves toward goals or

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<sup>7</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 243, 254.

<sup>8</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 85. MacIntyre relies on G. E. L. Owen, “The Platonism of Aristotle,” in *Articles on Aristotle*, vol. 1, *Science*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 14-34. Hare, likewise, sees strong continuity between Plato and Aristotle. See John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 8-10.

<sup>9</sup>Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, B 15.

<sup>10</sup>For discerning the highest end, see Aristotle, *Ethica nichomachea* 1094a1-3, 19-29. For Aristotle’s point that ethics is part of the τέχνη of politics, see *ibid.*, 1094b11-12. For the view that moral philosophy is an aid to fulfilling the highest end, see *ibid.*, 1179a35-b4.

<sup>11</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Carus, 1999), 23. I am using the word *functional* synonymously with *teleological* and *goal-directed*.

goods is what people do simply in virtue of being human. MacIntyre, furthermore, follows Aristotle in defining that which is good as what something desires or aims at.<sup>12</sup> Moral thinking both clarifies and sometimes identifies the good or goods that humans need to pursue.

**Two examples of teleology's influence.** This concept does not directly provide MacIntyre's moral philosophy with significant explanatory scope, but teleology is central in MacIntyre's theory. All of the examples of explanatory scope in this chapter and in the next chapter depend to some extent on the concept of human teleology. The five areas of explanatory scope in this dissertation are human animality, political theory, practical rationality, narrative, and human vulnerability. Teleology relates to these areas in different ways. To use the first example of explanatory scope, the teleological nature of humanity provides MacIntyre with a basis for his view concerning human animality. In determining the function of anything, one must determine what the purpose of that object is. In determining the function of humanity, one needs to determine what a human is. An essential part of being human is being an animal,<sup>13</sup> and that claim provides MacIntyre with explanatory scope. If humans have no function or τέλος, human animality loses relevance for morality.

A second example is narrative, which is the fourth area of explanatory scope that this dissertation provides. The relationship of this area of explanatory scope to teleology is the opposite of the previous example. MacIntyre claims that narrative is a basic concept in understanding human beings and the nature of morality. One cannot understand a moral action in the present without seeing that action as a part of some

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<sup>12</sup>MacIntyre claims, "A good moves an agent to direct her or his action towards that goal and to treat the achievement of that goal as a good achieved. . . . humans are goal-directed in virtue of their recognition of goods specific to their nature to be achieved." Ibid. Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1094a2, and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II – II, 94, 2.

<sup>13</sup>The sense in which MacIntyre calls humans animals is not the way that contemporary English speakers often use the word *animal*, but the following section discusses his particular meaning.

overarching narrative. If that action entails a narrative, then the narrative entails a teleology: “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 of a *telos* – or of a variety of ends or goals – towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present.”<sup>14</sup> Moral analysis requires that one assess whether a person is moving toward or failing to move toward his or her end.

In explaining the relationship between teleology and morality, MacIntyre notes that a functional view of humanity predates Aristotle.<sup>15</sup> In Greece, from the era of Homer to Aristotle’s milieu, to be a human being was to inhabit “a set of roles each of which has its own point and purpose: member of a family, citizen, soldier, philosopher, servant of God.”<sup>16</sup> In accordance with his predecessors and his surrounding culture, Aristotle explicitly extends this concept to being human. Just as being a good harpist means playing the harp well, being a good human means living well. Both activities involve roles, one of which is far broader than the other.<sup>17</sup> To be a moral agent is, therefore, to fulfill or fail to fulfill one’s role as a human being.

**Tripartite morality.** Given this functional view of humankind, moral thinking and action, for MacIntyre, have a tripartite framework. The three most basic ideas that come from having an Aristotelian teleology are the concept of a human not fulfilling his

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<sup>14</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215-16.

<sup>15</sup>Part of the reason that MacIntyre makes this point is to show how Aristotle is an exponent of a premodern view that many others have held through the centuries. This point was made above. Another reason, however, that MacIntyre de-emphasizes the uniqueness of Aristotle’s general perspective is because MacIntyre seeks to distance his view from Aristotelian science. As Christopher Lutz notes, MacIntyre is not simply calling for a return to the past; he is calling for a return to an Aristotelian framework in contemporary society: “Returning to an ethics of virtue means returning to teleology; thus, one of the central challenges of the constructive argument of chapters ten through eighteen [of *After Virtue*] is to propose a teleology that is amenable to contemporary thought, an account that begins from experience rather than from metaphysical assertions about Aristotelian forms.” Christopher Stephen Lutz, *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre’s After Virtue* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 71.

<sup>16</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 59.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 58. MacIntyre cites Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1095a16, but see *ibid.*, 1098a13.

or her innate purpose, a human fulfilling his or her purpose, and the rational principles necessary for a human to move from the former category to the latter category:

We thus have a threefold scheme in which human-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*. Each of the three elements of the scheme – the conception of untutored human nature, the conception of the precepts of rational ethics and the conception of human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos* – requires reference to the other two if its status and function are to be intelligible.<sup>18</sup>

To use a typically Aristotelian analogy, these three concepts are to moral philosophy what an acorn, oak tree, and the necessary conditions for an acorn becoming an oak tree are to arboriculture. Moral philosophy (or philosophical ethics) is then the discipline of studying how people progress from their untutored condition to the state in which they accomplish that innate purpose.<sup>19</sup>

**Teleology and moral language.** Teleology also shapes the understanding of a number of moral terms. One example is the way in which MacIntyre defines the nature of goodness and defends its objectivity. To be good is to fulfill one's purpose well. As a good watch, a good house, and a good soccer player all accomplish their respective purposes, so also a good person accomplishes his or her innate purpose.<sup>20</sup> With this functional view of humanity, to call something good is to make an objective statement about a state of affairs. To call a house, watch, or soccer player good is to make an

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<sup>18</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 53.

<sup>19</sup>Theism adds force to the moral precepts, but the overall tripartite format does not change. MacIntyre provides theists like Aquinas, Maimonides, or Ibn Rushd as examples: "the threefold structure of untutored human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be, human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos* and the precepts of rational ethics as the means for the transition from one to another remains central to the theistic understanding of evaluative thought and judgment." Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>To be a good person is like being a good soccer player in that to call someone either is to make an objective claim about how that person performs the role. A good person differs from being a good soccer player, however, in that being the type of person who earns the former description may mean not being the type of person who earns the latter description. In the former description, "we judge unconditionally 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 in this or that role or roles, but also *qua* human beings. It is these judgments that are judgments about human flourishing." MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 67.

objective judgment. To call a person good is no different. Without this teleological view of humans, MacIntyre's concept of goodness loses objectivity.<sup>21</sup>

A second example of the importance of teleology to MacIntyre's use of moral language is his notion of obligation. Contra Kant, a moral imperative is a hypothetical imperative for MacIntyre.<sup>22</sup> The moral agent reasons in the following way: "If I am to accomplish my purpose, I am to perform this action." The obligation arises from the purpose. Just as a good goalie has an obligation to make saves and a good watch has an obligation to keep time, humans have obligations as well because of their nature. MacIntyre can, therefore, claim that "an 'is' premise *can* on occasion entail an 'ought' conclusion."<sup>23</sup> The way that one can derive a conclusion that contains moral obligation from premises that are simply statements of fact is through a teleological view of humankind.

To summarize this section, to call someone an Aristotelian often has an inherent ambiguity. For the purposes of this dissertation, to call MacIntyre an Aristotelian is not to call him a virtue ethicist, an empiricist, or simply one who is nostalgic about fourth-century Athens. To call MacIntyre an Aristotelian is to refer to the central role that Aristotelian teleology plays in MacIntyre's moral philosophy. His view of teleology is important both because of the way that it is integral to the specific claims of explanatory scope that this dissertation provides and because of the way that he uses teleology to define vital moral terms.

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<sup>21</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 59. In *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue*, 71, Lutz summarizes MacIntyre's criticism of the Enlightenment as the claim that "without a *telos* that transcends the ends that an agent chooses, moral rules can only be imposed by some person's will; they cannot be discovered."

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (1956; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 68: "Where then can this [moral] worth be found if we are not to find it in the will's relation to the effect hoped for from the action? It can be found nowhere but *in the principle of the will*, irrespective of the ends which can be brought about by such an action . . ." Italics in original. For MacIntyre's complete rejection of what Kant states at this point, see MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 120.

<sup>23</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 53. Emphasis in original.

## Animality and Morality

The first way in which MacIntyre's philosophy provides explanatory scope is in the fact that his moral philosophy provides MacIntyre with a strong defense of the temporal unity of the self. MacIntyre defends the unity of the self through providing a philosophical anthropology that emphasizes the corporeal nature of humanity. He locates the continuity of the self in neither intuitive perception nor intellectual capacities. Bodily existence provides a matrix in which the human self continues throughout life.

After becoming an Aristotelian, MacIntyre initially ignored the relevance of the biological aspects of human nature for moral philosophy. He considered the hyломorphism of Aristotelian biology defunct and, therefore, sought to provide a sociological basis for human *telos* through the concepts of practice, narrative, and tradition.<sup>24</sup> Although MacIntyre has not abandoned these concepts, he has subsequently seen the need to incorporate corporeal aspects of human existence into his moral philosophy.<sup>25</sup> For the later MacIntyre, the nature of a human being is an essential element for determining what a human should do or be; a moral philosophy, therefore, presupposes and entails a philosophical anthropology. In his book *Dependent Rational Animals*, MacIntyre attempts to fill the lacuna of his earlier work through providing an account of what he calls, "human animality."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, xi. MacIntyre claims that subsequent to writing *After Virtue*, he saw the need for a metaphysical and biological grounding for his view of virtue. The metaphysical grounding led to his acceptance of theism and Catholic Christianity. The biological grounding is the subject of this section. See also MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, x. For a recent defense, however, of biological essentialism against Darwinism, see Stan W. Wallace, "In Defense of Biological Essentialism," *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2002): 29-43.

<sup>25</sup>Oliver O'Donovan rightly points out that MacIntyre's earlier denial of metaphysical and biological teleology precludes any assurance that a definite overarching good exists for humankind. See Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 221-22.

<sup>26</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 5. The first section of MacIntyre's book *Dependent Rational Animals* is an argument for significant continuity between humans and animals that are cognitively closer to humans like dolphins. The purpose of this argument is to provide the basis for the second section of the book, which is an attempt to account for dependence and vulnerability in human morality. Since these applications of human animality are specific to MacIntyre's reliance on Thomas Aquinas, they are discussed in the following chapter. The claim of this section is that his concept of human animality extends the explanatory scope of his moral philosophy even without the explicit application.

**Animality and physicalism.** In order to understand how MacIntyre's concept of human animality provides explanatory scope to his moral philosophy, one must understand what he means by human animality. The phrase appears to indicate that MacIntyre provides an evolutionary-based morality or a physicalist view of humanity, but he is positing neither view. He claims that historically the word *animal* has referred sometimes to a class of living things that includes human beings and sometimes to a class of living beings that excludes humans.<sup>27</sup> Although the latter use eventually became the norm, MacIntyre retains the former use. MacIntyre does accept macroevolution, but human animality is a set of observable traits that do not logically depend on the belief that all species have a common origin or a common ancestor.<sup>28</sup> He, moreover, argues against the physicalist view of humanity, which he defines as "the thesis that there are biochemical or neural states of affairs, processes, and events, the occurrence and the nature of which are the sufficient causes of human actions."<sup>29</sup> MacIntyre also claims that Hegel's arguments against physiognomy and phrenology are as devastating to a modern proponent of the physicalist view of humanity as they were to their original targets.

What MacIntyre means by human animality reflects his Aristotelian thinking. Although MacIntyre rejects Aristotelian biology, he connects morality to biology as Aristotle did. According to MacIntyre, "no philosopher has taken human animality more seriously" than Aristotle.<sup>30</sup> For Aristotle, humans share the vegetative parts of their souls

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<sup>27</sup>For these two definitions, see *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s. v. "Animal." The earlier attested of these two definitions is the definition that includes humanity.

<sup>28</sup>For an example of someone who heavily utilizes evolutionary theory in moral philosophy, see Larry Arnhart, *Darwinian Natural Right: The Biological Ethics of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998). For MacIntyre's acceptance of evolution, see MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 11-12. The primary comparison MacIntyre uses is the comparison between humans and dolphins. Unlike chimpanzees and gorillas, the cortex of dolphins has "a different architecture from that of the human cortex." *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>29</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "Hegel on Faces and Skulls," in *Selected Essays*, vol. 1, *The Tasks of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 78. For an overview of mind/body identity theory, see Thomas Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy: Philosophy in English since 1945, A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 201-3.

<sup>30</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 5.

with plants and other animals, but human souls have the same perceptive aspects that other animals have.<sup>31</sup> In MacIntyre's view, human animality refers to those properties that humans share with certain "nonhuman animals."<sup>32</sup> In other words, one can characterize human animality as a list of connections between humans and non-human animals.

**Shared properties.** MacIntyre provides four shared properties or connections between human behavior and non-human animal behavior: action, communal behavior, practical rationality, and beliefs. He attempts to demonstrate through these connections that human animality is a morally significant concept. He notes that few non-human animals share all of these properties with humans. Obviously, some non-human creatures share far more properties with humans than others. If one were to list all living creatures on a spectrum according to the encephalization quotient of each, the animals that are closer to humans on that spectrum tend to share more behavioral properties with humans. In this group of animals, one finds dolphins, which MacIntyre uses as a primary comparison. Using dolphins allows him to explore more significant connections than he would be able to do with animals that have a much lower encephalization quotient. He relies on recent research to claim that the affinity between dolphins and humans is more significant than philosophers have traditionally admitted.<sup>33</sup>

The first connection between humans and dolphins is the concept of action as opposed to bodily movement. Dolphins perform actions, which are purposive and more

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<sup>31</sup>Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1097b34-1098a3. See also Aristotle, *De Anima* 414a18-19.

<sup>32</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 13. In this section, I will use MacIntyre's term for the sake of convenience.

<sup>33</sup>MacIntyre relies on Karen Pryor and Kenneth S. Norris, eds., *Dolphin Societies: Discoveries and Puzzles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), and Ken Martin et al., "Ring Bubbles of Dolphins," *Scientific American* 27, August 1996. MacIntyre also juxtaposes his view with the views of both modern analytic and continental philosophers including Wittgenstein, Austin, Quine, Davidson, Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer, but he does not provide references. See MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 12.

specific than “mere sequences of bodily movements.”<sup>34</sup> Two actions can consist of the same bodily movement, but they remain different actions because they have different goals. For instance, two dolphins may jump out of the water and thus perform the same bodily movements. If one, however, jumps while hunting while the other jumps while playing after hunting, then although the bodily movement is the same, the action is different. Human actions are the same. One may cough in order to remove food from one’s trachea, or one may cough in order to disguise laughing. The bodily movements can be the same while the actions differ. Actions, moreover, require certain capabilities: various types of perception, emotion, affection, and fear. Dolphins, unlike many other non-human animals, possess these capabilities. The capability that both dolphins and humans have of performing an action as opposed merely to responding to stimuli is thus one connection.

A second connection is that communities are necessary in order for one to achieve necessary goals. Like humans, dolphins can “flourish only because they have learned how to achieve their goals through strategies concerted with other members of the different groups to which they belong or which they encounter.”<sup>35</sup> The process of hunting requires dolphins to share the same goals. The role of scouts differs from the roles of the rest of the members of the herd, but both scouts and non-scouts need one another to catch a sufficient number of fish.

**Controversial connections.** The next two connections are more controversial. Dolphins exhibit goal-directed behavior, which means, in Aristotelian terms, that they are seeking goods.<sup>36</sup> Since they seek goods, the third connection is the legitimacy of

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<sup>34</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 22. For an earlier defense of the difference between actions and bodily movements, see MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 191-210.

<sup>35</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 22. For an examination of the social aspects of dolphin behavior, see Louis M. Herman, ed., *Cetacean Behavior: Mechanisms and Functions* (1980; repr., Malabar, FL: Krieger, 1988).

<sup>36</sup>Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1094a1-3. Cf. Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I 5, 3-5. Aristotle tentatively posits

ascribing reasons for actions to dolphins. The argument is as follows:<sup>37</sup>

1. Dolphins seek goods.
2. Anything that seeks a good has good or bad reasons for actions.
3. Dolphins have good or bad reasons for actions.

The primary objection to this argument is that one cannot have reasons without the use of language.<sup>38</sup> MacIntyre responds that by claiming that in order to be practically rational, one must only judge that a particular action will result in a particular good. One need not have the ability to articulate that judgment. Since dolphins can and do change their strategies for hunting fish, one can assume that they are judging one means as having insufficient reason and another means as having sufficient reason. One does not, therefore, need to ascribe linguistic capacities to dolphins in order to ascribe to them reasons for actions.<sup>39</sup>

The fourth connection between humans and dolphins is that, according to MacIntyre, humans and dolphins have beliefs.<sup>40</sup> Although dolphins do have a complex system of communication, the way they communicate does not appear to have the basic requirements of language like vocabulary, syntax, semantics, or speech acts. MacIntyre notes that humans can discern the truth or falsity of a state of affairs pre-linguistically. An infant, for example, can often detect the presence of milk or his or her mother nearby without being able to use language. Certain non-human animals, likewise, also can

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that some non-human creatures seek goods. See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1173a4-6.

<sup>37</sup>See MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 23-26.

<sup>38</sup>This argument assumes an externalist view of practical rationality, which is the belief that a good is objectively valuable. Internalists argue that desires are what make actions rational. For a nuanced internalist view, see Alan Goldman, "Desires and Reasons," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 46 (2009): 291-304. For a defense of externalism, see Ulrike Heuer, "Reasons for Actions and Desires," *Philosophical Studies* 121 (2004): 43-63. MacIntyre is an externalist and relies on Warren Quinn, "Putting Rationality in Its Place," in *Value, Welfare, and Morality*, ed. R. G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26-50.

<sup>39</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 25.

<sup>40</sup>For the whole argument, see *ibid.*, 29-41.

discern truth and falsity without being able to use language, and this discernment is evident to outsiders. For example, a dog owner can determine whether a dog believes a cat is in a tree by whether that dog continues barking and looking into the tree. In humans, moreover, belief in truth and falsity require some type of pre-linguistic recognition. If no pre-linguistic understanding were available, human beings could not learn the concepts of truth and falsity. Learning the words *true* and *false* requires that someone have some form of incipient understanding of those concepts. Linguistic reflection, therefore, logically rests on the pre-reflective ways humans come to believe certain states of affairs.<sup>41</sup> That is, one learns to recognize truth and falsity before one learns how to articulate truth and falsity.

**Corporeality and the self.** In light of the above similarities between humans and dolphins, a number of animal rights activists claim that humans should recognize non-human creatures as persons.<sup>42</sup> The argument is that dolphins or chimpanzees possess the properties sufficient for personhood, moral dignity, or moral respect. Peter Singer, moreover, argues that a number of different species have more moral worth than mentally handicapped humans.<sup>43</sup> MacIntyre makes an argument in the opposite direction. He claims that these connections should affect the way one thinks about human nature. At some point in their lives, all humans possess the same traits as non-human creatures. Instead of using these observations to argue that animals deserve a certain amount of dignity and respect, MacIntyre argues that one should adjust one's definition of humanity:

our whole bodily comportment towards the world is originally an animal comportment and . . . when, through having become language-users, we under the

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<sup>41</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 37.

<sup>42</sup>See, for example, Thomas I. White, *In Defense of Dolphins: The New Moral Frontier* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>43</sup>Peter Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status," *Metaphilosophy* 40 (2009): 567-81.

guidance of parents and others restructure that comportment, elaborate and in new ways correct our beliefs and redirect our activities, we never make ourselves independent of our animal nature and inheritance . . . it is of the first importance that what we thereby become are redirected and remade animals and not something else. . . . We remain animal selves with animal identities.<sup>44</sup>

While the purpose of MacIntyre's argument is to make the point that human nature is essentially vulnerable and dependent, the argument itself broadens the explanatory scope of MacIntyre's moral theory. Major issues like moral agency, culpability, and moral value require the continuity of the self through time. Dallas Willard notes that morality requires a substantial self. He claims, "The moral dimensions of life pose similar demands on the substance of the self. They require the drawing together of massive dimensions of the self, if not the self as a whole. The morally significant act is an act of the whole person."<sup>45</sup> Morality requires, moreover, that this substantial self be capable of "dynamically organized long-term dispositions of thought."<sup>46</sup> In other words, a self must exist through periods of time.

In light of the way moral aspects of life require a substantial view of the self, a moral philosophy that accounts for a substantial self has greater explanatory scope than a moral philosophy that does not. In MacIntyre's view, the "animal comportment" or corporeality is an essential part of being human. If human beings are essentially corporeal or "animal" and if the cognitive or rational capacities depend on that corporeality, then the corporeality provides the continuity for the individual self. The continuity does not rest on cognitive or rational capabilities.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 49. His primary criticism of Descartes is not simply that Descartes grossly misunderstood non-human creatures; he claims that Descartes grossly misunderstood humans. See *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>45</sup>Dallas Willard, "Intentionality and the Substance of the Self," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 18.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 19. Roger Trigg, likewise, notes, "To these metaphysical conclusions about the necessary pre-conditions of language must be added the importance of the moral responsibility of the persisting self for the existence of society. So far from being the creation of language or society, the existence of the self is the absolute pre-condition for both." Roger Trigg, "The Metaphysical Self," in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, ed. Charles Taliaferro and Paul J. Griffiths (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 564.

<sup>47</sup>This view does not need to suggest that human beings cannot exist outside of or apart from

**Human animality, physicalism, and dualism.** One may see the explanatory scope of MacIntyre's view by comparing his view with one physicalist view of Peter Singer and the dualist view of J. P. Moreland. While a physicalist view of the self contains other fatal difficulties,<sup>48</sup> explicating the self is particularly problematic. Peter Singer grounds moral dignity in cognitive abilities. He attacks "speciesism," which is the belief that moral dignity comes from being a member of the human race. Singer claims that prioritizing humanity is as arbitrary as prioritizing one race or gender:

We cannot claim that biological commonality entitles us to superior status over those who are not members of our species. In the case of applying this to people with severe and profound cognitive disabilities, there is also a problem about saying who the 'we' are. What is really important about saying 'us'? Is it that we are all capable of understanding language, and perhaps even rational argument? . . . I think it is much more important that the 'we' of this statement are beings of at least a certain level of cognitive ability.<sup>49</sup>

Singer attacks those who claim that humans have moral worth simply by being human by pointing out that infants and those who are mentally handicapped lack the cognitive abilities for self-awareness. Singer's view, however, entails that one need to be able to specify the level of one's intelligence quotient necessary for moral dignity. His view also entails that young children have less moral worth than adults and, moreover, that Alzheimer's patients have even less moral dignity because of the lack of potential of their cognitive abilities. By locating moral dignity in abilities rather than the self, Singer's view entails that the worth of a single human being will vary widely within the lifetime of that person. The substantial self, of which Willard writes, or the "persisting self"<sup>50</sup> of which Roger Trigg writes, becomes an ephemeron.

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the body. Such a state of existence, however, would not be fully human. This view also implies respect for human corpses.

<sup>48</sup>See J. P. Moreland, "The Argument from Consciousness," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, ed. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 282-343. Moreland's argument is primarily an attack against naturalist or physicalist explanations of consciousness.

<sup>49</sup>Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status," 573.

<sup>50</sup>Trigg, "The Metaphysical Self," 564.

The problem with Singer's view is that nothing substantive undergirds moral dignity. Cognitive abilities are hardly static entities. For instance, consider the example of a late octogenarian who loses short-term and long-term memory, the ability to feed himself, and the ability to distinguish days. He remains in that state while having major surgery on a joint. Four months after losing his memory, he regains his cognitive capacities. In Singer's view, no enduring self connects the man in his former state to the man in his latter state. When the man lost his cognitive capacities, the man lost his moral significance. In MacIntyre's view, the man's identity never changed. He reverted into his animal state, but he regains his abilities as the same morally significant individual.

J. P. Moreland defines the self as fully distinct from the body.<sup>51</sup> If the self is fully distinct from the body and if the recognition of this fully distinct self rests on intuitions, then the grounds are unstable for thinking that other individuals that lack intuitive capabilities have selves.<sup>52</sup> If humans are essentially not less than animal selves, then at any time a human exists, that human is a self. This continuity exists regardless of whether that human has the capability for the intuition requisite in the defense of the first premise of Moreland's argument. One need not reduce personhood to capacities. Infancy, mental disability, and geriatric senility are stages that moral agents experience. A moral philosophy that explains how moral agents remain moral agents as they enter and exit stages of life where they have capabilities vastly similar to non-human animals is explanatorily superior, all things being equal, to moral philosophies that do not.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>The first premise of Moreland's argument for substance dualism is, "I am essentially an indivisible, simple spiritual substance." Moreland provides nine "widely embraced" intuitions in support of this premise. See J. P. Moreland, "Substance Dualism and the Argument from Self-Awareness," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 22-26.

<sup>52</sup>This statement only applies to philosophical grounds.

<sup>53</sup>MacIntyre's view coincides with the necessity and moral relevance of Christian resurrection. If humans are essentially corporeal, then disembodiment is an essentially incomplete state. N. T. Wright claims that, in Paul, "the continuity between present and future life [is] seen in terms of the body." N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 370. For the moral relevance of this continuity, see *ibid.*, 290.

## Morality and Political Theory

In the work of both premodern and early modern moral philosophers, moral theory and political theory are two aspects of one discipline.<sup>54</sup> Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Thomism entail certain political commitments. In recent analytic moral philosophy, such is often no longer the case. For example, Thomas Baldwin claims in his survey of analytic philosophy that a discussion of political philosophy would have enlarged his book beyond what is reasonable, and in Craig and Moreland's analytic survey of Christian philosophy, they do not give any space to political philosophy.<sup>55</sup> While limitations due to specialization and space are understandable, if a moral philosopher can demonstrate a connection between his or her moral philosophy and his or her political philosophy, then that view is, all other things being equal, more plausible than a view for which no connection exists. The claim of this section is that MacIntyre's moral philosophy exhibits greater explanatory scope than moral philosophies that do not contain political philosophies. MacIntyre shows this connection between his moral philosophy and political philosophy, moreover, as an Aristotelian.

Aristotle famously claimed that a human being is a πολιτικὸν ζῷον.<sup>56</sup> While in popular culture this claim often serves as a trite introduction to political discussions, Aristotle was not simply making the point that humans tend to be interested in and involved with politics; on the contrary, this phrase means that because of their nature human beings should aggregate into a πόλις, which Aristotle defines as “a partnership of families and of clans in living well.”<sup>57</sup> He gives three reasons for the πόλις: (1) the

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<sup>54</sup>Significant exceptions are in the work of a number of Hellenistic philosophies such as Cynicism and Epicureanism.

<sup>55</sup>Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy*, 233, specifically refers to lacking space for the political philosophy of Rawls, but he does not cover the political philosophy of other thinkers. For Craig and Moreland's discussion of axiology, see William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 393-459. For the reluctance of virtue ethicists to apply their theories to political matters, see Thomas S. Hibbs, “MacIntyre, Aquinas, and Politics,” *Review of Politics* 66 (2004): 357.

<sup>56</sup>See Aristotle, *Politica* 1253a and 1278b20. Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1097b12.

<sup>57</sup>Aristotle, *Pol.* 1280b34. The translation is H. Rackham's. See Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H.

political nature of human beings inclines individuals in that direction; (2) a communal effort is necessary for the achievement of the good life; and (3) life requires the support of groups of individuals larger than a household.<sup>58</sup>

Only in the context of the πόλις, according to Aristotle, can one truly understand virtue.<sup>59</sup> For Aristotle, therefore, moral terms and political terms are mutually dependent. Like Aristotle, MacIntyre believes that localized community is necessary for the virtues. Like Aristotle, he believes that human nature requires this social aspect. His view of the social structure required for morality, however, is not the same as an Aristotelian πόλις, and he does not reject the nation-state in every way. A community smaller than a nation-state and larger than a family is necessarily more basic to human flourishing than a nation-state.<sup>60</sup> The remainder of this section provides an overview of MacIntyre's philosophical defense of this political unit.

**Moral language and social structure.** One aspect of MacIntyre's defense for the smaller political unit as a requirement for coherent moral practice is, he claims, that moral language itself in part depends on social structures. MacIntyre, like many of those with whom he disagrees, sees the importance of moral philosophers paying close attention to moral language.<sup>61</sup> He argues that moral language is dependent on social

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Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 217. The original is, “ἡ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν κοινωνία καὶ ταῖς οἰκίαις καὶ τοῖς γένεσι,” which Jowett translates as “a community of families and aggregations of families in well-being.” Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. B. Jowett, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Edition*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: The University of Princeton Press, 1983), 2032. As David Bentley Hart notes, by the term “political animals,” Aristotle “meant that human nature is essentially communal and is brought to fruition in the cooperative conventions of the polis, with its vital and complex interdependencies of private, familial, and public associations, and that the arts of statecraft should be in service to these social goods.” David Bentley Hart, “A Dream for Our Political Season,” *First Things* 222 (2012), 72.

<sup>58</sup>Aristotle, *Pol.* 1278b18-30.

<sup>59</sup>MacIntyre summarizes Aristotle's view as claiming that “the city-state is the unique political form in which alone the virtues of human life can be genuinely and fully exhibited.” MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 147. For Aristotle, without virtue, the community or κοινωνία requisite in a πόλις merely becomes an alliance or συμμαχία. See Aristotle, *Pol.* 1280b5-14.

<sup>60</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 9.

<sup>61</sup>The quintessential example is R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford

structure. For Homer, for instance, words like ἀρετή and ἀγαθός differ in what they mean from the way in which a citizen of classical Athens would understand them. This change in meaning is due largely to a shift in social reality. In Homer's writings, one must be a nobleman who fulfills his role well to have ἀρετή; for fourth-century democratic Athenians, nobility is not a prerequisite.<sup>62</sup> An example from the English language is the history of the word *ought*. MacIntyre notes that a predominately "moral" use of the word ought is when one uses as a primary reason for moral action as in the sentence, "You ought to be kind." This use did not occur until the 1700s.<sup>63</sup> Before this usage, the word denoted obligation only insofar as the concept of some human good was involved, as in "He ought to kill you in order to avenge his brother's death." In this latter sentence, *ought* is subservient to the good. The good is the avenging of the death of a relative. The meaning of the word depended on social conditions.<sup>64</sup>

Another example significant to MacIntyre's argument is the concept of *taboo*.<sup>65</sup> He claims that the perplexity of the Europeans' first encounter with the Polynesians' appeal to taboo is explicable if that type of appeal exists "as a survival from

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University Press, 1961). Iris Murdoch notes concerning moral philosophy that "the main task is the task on which moral philosophy is in fact engaged – the analysis of contemporary moral concepts, through moral language." Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter Conradi (New York: Penguin, 1997), 73.

<sup>62</sup>For an examination of the way the terms ἀρετή and ἀγαθός changed in ancient Greece, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 5-13.

<sup>63</sup>MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 142. I place the word *moral* with scare quotes because MacIntyre uses this phrase ironically.

<sup>64</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 193. Part of the social conditions that brought about the "moral" ought, according to MacIntyre, is the loss of Protestant worldview. MacIntyre claims, "It is only to be noted, in post-Protestant cultures that the moral 'ought' ever appears. And it appears precisely in the period when the judgment that men ought to do so and so can no longer be supported by appeal to the nature that God created and the purposes toward which the commandments of God are directed." MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 168.

<sup>65</sup>MacIntyre relies on the work of seminal anthropologist Mary Douglas. See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1966).

some previous more elaborate cultural background.”<sup>66</sup> That background changed dramatically, and the taboo rules became arbitrary. These examples of ἀγαθός, ἀρετή, ought, taboo, and others are evidence that moral language depends at least partially on social structures.<sup>67</sup> As social structures change, moral language necessarily changes, whether those social structures exist in post-Homeric Greece, medieval Iceland, Polynesia, or the modern West.

**Common good.** The argument from moral language only demonstrates that the moral philosopher must pay attention to social practices. Without any more argumentation, no need for political theory exists. MacIntyre’s more significant argument, therefore, is his concept of the common good. One may view the common good as simply the collection of all individual goods. When John Rawls, for example, elaborates his definition of the common good in his definition of justice, he replaces the term for “the common advantage.”<sup>68</sup> The common good then is a state of affairs that is to the advantage of everyone in which “every party must gain.”<sup>69</sup> Within this view, to work for the common good of a community is to strive to ensure that as many individuals as possible attain their individual goods. This whole is simply the sum of the parts.

MacIntyre rejects this view of the common good. He claims that this view nullifies the type of sacrifice that is essential in causing a society not to disintegrate (the sacrifice that “soldiers, police officers, firefighters” make).<sup>70</sup> In other words, for a society

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<sup>66</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 112-13.

<sup>67</sup>For MacIntyre’s discussion of the relationship between the Norse word *skyldr*, an ancestor of the English word *should*, in the social structure of the saga of Gisli the Soursop, see MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 143-45. For the Greek word δεῖν, see *ibid.*, 146-48.

<sup>68</sup>John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” in *Classics of Philosophy*, ed. Louis P. Pojman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1248-49. Robert Nozick’s view is also based on an individual’s rights. See Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic, 1974).

<sup>69</sup>Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” 1249. Emphasis original.

<sup>70</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, “Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good,” in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 241-42.

to experience significant stability, certain individuals must be willing to relinquish their lives and, therefore, their individual goods. Making such a sacrifice requires one to believe in a good that transcends one's own individual good.<sup>71</sup> MacIntyre's view of the common good is one, therefore, in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts.<sup>72</sup>

**Common good and *Gemeinschaft*.** In order to see how his view coincides with his Aristotelian teleology, one may examine what he says in his treatment of the phenomenologist philosopher, Edith Stein. A close correlation exists in the way community functions in MacIntyre's own moral philosophy and his description of Stein's appropriation of Ferdinand Tönnies. In Tönnies's view, two types of social organization exist: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Tönnies claims that the hallmark of *Gemeinschaft* is organic unity, but *Gesellschaft* is characterized by associations that remain essentially atomistic: "The *Gemeinschaft* is characterized by the social will as concord, folkways, mores, and religion; the *Gesellschaft* by the social will as convention, legislation, and public opinion."<sup>73</sup>

Although Tönnies does not use teleological language, Stein combines the views of both Tönnies and Aristotle. She claims that *Gemeinschaft* and Aristotelian *φιλία* are necessary for a state because the communal mindset within each concept is more fundamental than justice.<sup>74</sup> MacIntyre, moreover, expounds *Gemeinschaft* and

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<sup>71</sup>He claims that the rhetoric of modern nation-states conflate transcendent language with the language of an organization provide commodities: "The modern state is a large, complex and often ramshackle set of interlocking institutions, combining none too coherently the ethos of a public utility company with inflated claims to embody ideals of liberty and justice." MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," 236. For a more extended discussion of the same point, see MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 131-33.

<sup>72</sup>For Aristotelian support, see Aristotle *Pol.* 1278b22-25.

<sup>73</sup>Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, trans. Charles P. Loomis (1957; repr., Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002), 231. Earlier, Tönnies discusses types of *Gemeinschaft*: that of kinship, locality, and friendship. In none of these types does he use the language of ends. He states, "Whenever human beings are related through their wills in an organic manner and affirm each other, we find one or another of the three types of *Gemeinschaft*." *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>74</sup>Edith Stein, *An Investigation Concerning the State*, trans. Marianna Sawicki (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2006), 18. Stein combines both *Gemeinschaft* with *φιλία* for what she

*Gesellschaft* in completely teleological terms: “The social relationships of community are relationships within which I find myself directed towards the end of *Gemeinschaft*, so that I make its ends my own. The social relationships of *Gesellschaft* are relationships into which I enter so that I may further my own individual ends by furthering the ends of the association.”<sup>75</sup> *Gemeinschaft*, therefore, reflects MacIntyre’s view of a common good.

For MacIntyre, *Gemeinschaft* is smaller, localized, and role-oriented. This idea conforms to his view of a local political unity in his other writings. Part of modernity’s failure in moral philosophy is the marginalization of the concept of a role.<sup>76</sup> In his view, *Gesellschaft* is something that “is entered into by individuals who may differ widely in belief, but recognize that they need the cooperation of other individuals to achieve their ends.”<sup>77</sup> MacIntyre claims that the nature of institutions has shifted largely from being those of *Gemeinschaft* to those of *Gesellschaft*, and this shift corresponds to his history of premodern views giving way to modern moral philosophy. The views of a liberal political theorist such as Rawls or a libertarian political theorist like Nozick both require *Gesellschaft*. Each individual pursues his or her own good or end, and political unity is for the purpose of pursuing one’s own good.

If a common good is truly to be a good that all the members of a community share, then most individuals need to participate in some sense. A number of aspects of modern nation-states prevent this involvement. First, modern nation-states, according to MacIntyre, preclude the participation of groups that do not have significant amounts of

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calls, “community consciousness.” See Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 1155a20-25. Cf. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 156.

<sup>75</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 118.

<sup>76</sup>In *After Virtue*, he states that “according to that [premodern] tradition to be a man is to fill a set of roles each of which has its own point and purpose: member of a family, citizen, soldier, philosopher, servant of God. It is only when man is thought of as an individual prior to and apart from all roles that ‘man’ ceases to be a functional concept.” MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 59. Chapter 6 of this dissertation treats this concept.

<sup>77</sup>MacIntyre, *Edith Stein*, 119.

money; most individuals, therefore, do not participate.<sup>78</sup> Second, the complexity of aspects of the modern nation-state such as tax codes, regulations, and legal language also necessitate a class of experts, thereby excluding the majority of a population from significant influence.<sup>79</sup> Third, the modern nation-state is dependent on economic growth to an extent that the existence of the modern nation-state assumes that financial gain is an ultimate good for individuals. This format exalts market relationships at the expense of more relationships basic to *Gemeinschaft*: familial, religious, and educational.<sup>80</sup> In MacIntyre's view, modern nation-states are, therefore, "oligarchies disguised as liberal democracies."<sup>81</sup>

A number of weaknesses exist in MacIntyre's position at this point. The most significant weakness is that MacIntyre does not differentiate two separate claims. To claim that modern nation-states exclude most citizens from pursuing the common good is not the same as claiming that modern nation-states must exclude most citizens from pursuing the common good. He gives no reason other than size why modern nation-states could not be based on a robust view of the common good. Another weakness in MacIntyre's position is that MacIntyre does not actually define what the common good is. One must assume that the common good is what results when a community collectively pursues the flourishing of the community as a whole. A third weakness is that MacIntyre changes the term against which he argues: "the contemporary state," "the modern liberal state," and "consumer society."<sup>82</sup> MacIntyre evidently believes that each

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<sup>78</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 131.

<sup>79</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Selected Essays*, vol. 2, *Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006), 210.

<sup>80</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 117.

<sup>81</sup>He continues by claiming, "The large majority of those who inhabit them are excluded from membership in the elites that determine the range of alternatives between which voters are permitted to choose." See MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good," 237.

<sup>82</sup>For examples of each, see MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics*, 210; idem, *After Virtue*, 172; and idem, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 117. For a similar criticism, see Jeffrey Stout, "Homeward Bound: MacIntyre on Liberal Societies and the History of Ethics," *The Journal of Religion* 69 (1989): 227. For a

moniker describes one reality. He, nonetheless, does not argue that each is a description of the same entity.

Although MacIntyre's view of the common good contains ambiguities, he, nonetheless, connects his moral theory to his political theory. None of these ambiguities, moreover, are fatal to his view; his view simply needs more arguments. In light of his political philosophy, his moral philosophy has a plausibility that moral theories that do not account for the political organization of moral agents do not have. At this point, one sees the need for moral philosophers taking into account political realities, and MacIntyre posits a view of the common good that reflects an Aristotelian teleology.

**Practical rationality and politics.** A third argument for his political theory is his view of practical rationality. This argument provides explanatory scope in two ways. The first way is that MacIntyre's view of practical rationality entails a group collectively seeking to be practically rational. The second way is that MacIntyre's view of practical rationality provides metaethical support for entire enterprise of moral philosophy. The second way is treated in the following major section of this chapter since the metaethical support is another area of explanatory scope.

According to Aristotle, a virtue that is essential in living a virtuous life is *φρόνησις*, which Aristotle defines as the tendency to act according rationally for the sake of what is good.<sup>83</sup> In other words, this virtue is the ability to find appropriate means to fulfill moral goals and purposes. MacIntyre, likewise, makes use of this concept, which he defines as “the exercise of a capacity to apply truths about what is good for such and such a person or for persons as such to do generally and in certain types of situation to

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defense of MacIntyre, see Christopher Stephen Lutz, “No One Is Minding the Store: MacIntyre's Critique of Modern Liberal Individualism,” *Perspectives on Political Science* 44 (2015): 115-21.

<sup>83</sup>Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1140b4-5. John Hare states that “the man of practical wisdom has a reasoned state of capacity to act in that he both gives himself the right ends or goals and deliberates successfully about the means to their achievement.” John E. Hare, “Aristotle's Theories of Essence” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1975), 12.

oneself on particular occasions.”<sup>84</sup> In both MacIntyre and Aristotle, practical rationality means that one correctly discerns a fixed good and acts in a way to attain that good.

Aristotle utilizes the concept of the practical syllogism. In order to be a practical rational person, one needs to act as if one had constructed a sound practical syllogism.<sup>85</sup> This syllogism which starts with a particular good could eventually be traced back to a syllogism that begins with a statement concerning the highest and best good. The minor premise of the syllogism is the particular means of attaining that good, and the action is the conclusion. The reason that practical rationality is important for MacIntyre’s political views has to do with the concept of deliberation. Deliberation is the attempt to construct a practical syllogism, and this action is essential in becoming practically rational. If two people are deliberating as to what the correct action, they must agree on the supreme good. In other words, they must agree on what the function of being human is. Discovery of and agreement upon the supreme good are prerequisites to deliberation.<sup>86</sup> Deliberation, moreover, occurs both at the personal level and at the political level.

**Political ramifications.** Three political ramifications exist for this view of practical rationality and deliberation. The first ramification is that deliberation requires dialectic. Although deliberation can occur periodically on an individual level, at other times, one needs the help of others to make the practically rational decision. Working through various possibilities with others is dialectic, which MacIntyre defines as “the confronting of alternative and rival opinions, especially of those most plausibly and

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<sup>84</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 115-16.

<sup>85</sup>See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1146b35-1147a1, 1147a25-31. The practically rational individual does not need to articulate the syllogism explicitly. He or she must simply act in a way that would be the same as if that person would have constructed a practical syllogism. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 131. A practically rational person will hardly ever have to make a syllogism explicit. See MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 106-107. MacIntyre also notes that a practically irrational individual can also construct a syllogism, but the first premise will concern a passion or desire instead of what is good. For this point, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 129.

<sup>86</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 134.

cogently argued, by each other, so that we may arrive at a conclusion as to which of these best survives the strongest objections which can be advanced on the basis of the others.”<sup>87</sup> One must submit decisions to the criticisms of others in order to be practically rational; dialectic within the context of a community that shares a view of the common good is necessary if human beings are truly political animals.<sup>88</sup> If a political unit, moreover, is to make rational decisions, then dialectic must also occur at the level of that political unit. If dialectic occurs, then a shared view of the common good is necessary.

A second political ramification is that one needs to learn how to argue properly in order to deliberate. Since practical rationality is paramount in achieving one’s good, humans need to learn how to argue; therefore, “everything that can inhibit, frustrate or damage the exercise of the powers of reasoning is a potential threat.”<sup>89</sup> One threat to practical rationality is never receiving the proper training or education. The process of this type of education includes three major transitions and a prerequisite.<sup>90</sup> The prerequisite is the use of language, without which human are significantly similar to non-human animals.

The first transition is distinguishing the self from one’s desires so that one’s desires do not dictate one’s actions. The second transition is from simply performing actions for a reason to being able to adjudicate between good reasons and bad reasons. The third transition is the transition from adjudicating between good reasons and bad reasons to becoming able to envision possible futures and allowing those possibilities to inform one’s present decisions. At this point, one becomes an “independent practical reasoner.”<sup>91</sup> Each of these transitions requires the instruction and guidance of individuals

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<sup>87</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 118.

<sup>88</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 200.

<sup>89</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 68.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 72-74.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

who have already made these transitions. In other words, attaining practical rationality requires a community that already values, supports, and produces practical rationality.

The third political ramification that this view of deliberation requires is in the use of imagination. Imagination is essential in deliberation. Failure in imagination occurs in two ways. The first way is that an individual constrains the imagination so that future possibilities are unduly narrow. The second way is when an imagination is unrealistic or fantastical.<sup>92</sup> The existence of others is necessary to avoiding these possibilities. Deliberation at times requires others to expose certain possibilities that an individual envisions as fantasies. At other times, the existence of others who share the same vision of the common good is necessary to bring to light other possibilities from which the practical reasoner may choose.<sup>93</sup> The imagination necessary for deliberation at the political level requires a community of practically rational individuals. In order to prevent the gamut of possibilities from either being unrealistic or too narrow, deliberation must occur as broadly as feasible. Each participant in deliberation must, furthermore, share a view of the common good.

In MacIntyre's view, three areas all have political ramifications for an Aristotelian moral philosophy: moral language, common good, and deliberation. While none of these three arguments is likely to persuade those who do not accept many of their Aristotelian premises, what MacIntyre does offer is a moral philosophy that entails a number of political commitments. MacIntyre does not see political philosophy as irrelevant to moral philosophy. The two activities, in his view, constitute one discipline, and what is good for an individual both affects and is affected by what is good for a group of individuals. If all things are equal, his view, therefore, contains an explanatory

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<sup>92</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 76.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

scope greater than views of thinkers who lack the space or specialty to connect what is good for the part with what is good for the whole.

### **Practical Rationality and the Basis for Ethics**

MacIntyre's view of practical rationality adds another dimension of explanatory scope to his moral philosophy.<sup>94</sup> One of the most basic issues that a moral philosopher must address is answering the question, "Why should someone be or become moral?" Some follow both Hume and Kant in arguing for a sharp disjunction between morality and practical reason or between morality and facts. For example, Kai Nielsen claims that "pure practical reason, even with a good knowledge of the facts, will not take you to morality."<sup>95</sup> In Nielsen's view, morality is fundamentally and necessarily disconnected from practical rationality. Moral judgments and actions only override prudential or hedonistic judgments and actions if one already takes a "moral point of view."<sup>96</sup> If one does not take a moral perspective, then no reason exists why someone should be moral. Nielsen notes that although this position is emotionally distressing, to maintain the distinction between morality and practical rationality is "an important philosophical lesson."<sup>97</sup>

An implication of Nielsen's position is that morality is an entirely separate realm of human thinking than practical rationality.<sup>98</sup> One of these realms has to do with the world of facts, proofs, and reasons, and the other realm is separate from the factual

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<sup>94</sup>Since the concept of practical rationality has already been discussed, this section will be significantly smaller.

<sup>95</sup>Kai Nielsen, "Why Should I Be Moral? Revisited," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (1984): 91.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>98</sup>Of course, to make a decision that is both moral and practical would certainly still sometimes be the case; the chain of reasoning to get to that point would, however, be entirely separate depending one's initial perspective.

world. One simply chooses to be moral, and rationality has nothing to do with this decision.<sup>99</sup> A moral philosophy that can explain both of these areas of human thinking without positing moral thought as a separate realm has, all things being equal, a broader explanatory scope than philosophies that do not. Conversely, a moral philosophy like Nielsen's has a narrower scope of explanation since his moral philosophy does not cover practical reason.

For MacIntyre, practical rationality and moral action are two ways of referring to the same truth. An irrational action is an immoral action, and a moral action is a practically rational action. MacIntyre's view is, therefore, simpler than Nielson's view. When MacIntyre, therefore, explains moral behavior, thoughts, and dispositions, his view also covers rational behavior, thoughts, and dispositions.<sup>100</sup>

One may object to MacIntyre's account in a number of different ways. If one unifies rational behavior with moral behavior, then one still needs to justify rational behavior. MacIntyre gives the Aristotelian response that practical rationality leads to human flourishing, but those who reject his eudaimonism or teleology will remain unconvinced.<sup>101</sup> The benefit of MacIntyre's view is that this area is one more part of human existence that MacIntyre's moral philosophy covers. As a moral philosopher,

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<sup>99</sup>Simon Blackburn's basis for a moral outlook is, likewise, a personal choice that is not subject to standards of rationality. The first-person pronouns underscore this separation: "In any event, *we* cannot get behind ethics. *We* need standards of behaviour, in *our* own eyes, and *we* need recognition in the eyes of others. So *our* concern is not to 'answer' the relativist by some cunning intellectual or metaphysical trick. *Our* concern can only be to answer the challenge from within a set of standards which *we* uphold. From within *our self*-understanding, *we* can admit that those standards are *ours* – just *ours*. *We* legislate them for *ourselves*." Simon Blackburn, *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 133. Emphasis mine.

<sup>100</sup>Hare's earlier view based morality upon prudence: "Any answer to the question 'why should I want other people's good?' has to go beyond morality. For the answer 'in order to be moral' is not likely to carry any weight. The justification of morality is exactly the issue. . . . the obvious source for our answer is an appeal to prudence." John E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 13. Hare no longer adheres to consequentialism; his present view is the subject of chap. 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>101</sup>For two vastly different types of rejections of eudaimonism, see Blackburn, *Being Good*, 112-16, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 10. For a vociferous rejection of teleology, see Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 385.

MacIntyre's theory is based upon the belief that morality has an overriding quality. If morality is overriding, then every aspect of human life has a moral dimension.

## CHAPTER 3

### A THOMISTIC ARISTOTELIAN

In the years between writing *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Alasdair MacIntyre became a Thomist.<sup>1</sup> For him, this conversion was only a partial conversion. MacIntyre did not cease being an Aristotelian; he merely became a certain type of Aristotelian. The primary argument of this chapter is that this conversion enhanced the explanatory scope of MacIntyre's view in two important ways. This chapter, therefore, is a second part to the primary contention of the previous chapter. As the continuation of that argument, this chapter concludes by addressing some of the primary criticisms of MacIntyre's moral philosophy. Since the claim of this chapter and the previous chapter is that MacIntyre's moral philosophy has significant explanatory scope, this chapter only contains responses to the types of criticisms that would render the claim of explanatory scope moot. One of these criticisms is that of moral relativism. If MacIntyre's moral philosophy entails relativism, explanatory scope is not a helpful criterion. One who defends the explanatory scope of MacIntyre's philosophy must respond to these types of criticisms.

#### **Thomism and Explanatory Scope**

The two aspects of explanatory scope that this chapter explains reflect the Thomistic modifications to MacIntyre's Aristotelianism. In becoming a Thomist, MacIntyre elaborated his particular concept of tradition. MacIntyre presents Aquinas as

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<sup>1</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame press, 2007), x.

combining the Augustinian tradition that he inherited with the Aristotelian tradition that he encountered from the Muslim world. In light of this modification, MacIntyre specifies the term that he defends. He is not only defending the “the tradition of the virtues”; he is defending a “tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive enquiry.”<sup>2</sup> Although MacIntyre never accepted Aristotle’s view of μεγαλοψυχία,<sup>3</sup> Thomism provides MacIntyre with a firmer ground upon which to reject Aristotle’s views on pride, slavery, and women. MacIntyre’s view of tradition, moreover, and his rejection of certain elements of Aristotle’s own view provide MacIntyre with ways to explain moral epistemology and the moral relevance of human vulnerability.<sup>4</sup>

### **Practices, Narrative, and Tradition**

Every moral philosophy needs a moral epistemology. Although elucidating the nature of moral concepts and explaining how human beings come to know those moral concepts are different tasks, each task requires the other task in order for one to have a cogent moral philosophy. If a moral philosopher is unable to provide an explanation of either of these aspects of moral philosophy, then his or her particular view lacks explanatory scope. The concepts of practice, narrative, and tradition in MacIntyre’s thought provide him with a way to explain how human beings come to know moral reality. Although MacIntyre’s explanation is Aristotelian, these areas coincide with his turn to Thomism. After a brief discussion of the Aristotelian nature of MacIntyre’s epistemology, this section includes an explanation of MacIntyre’s particular views of

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<sup>2</sup>For the first term, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 243. For the second term, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 390.

<sup>3</sup>MacIntyre calls this virtue “appalling.” He states, “The great-souled man’s characteristic attitudes require a society of superiors and inferiors in which he can exhibit his peculiar brand of condescension. He is essentially a member of a society of unequals.” Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 78-79.

<sup>4</sup>For a nuanced discussion of a number of points of continuity and discontinuity between Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 183-208.

practice, narrative, and tradition. The section concludes with the relationship between these definitions and explanatory scope.

**Practice and moral epistemology.** For Aristotle, one learns moral virtues not initially through discussing the virtues in an ethics class, but through habits or action.<sup>5</sup> One lives regularly a certain way, and this repeated action forms a propensity. If that propensity typically achieves a good, then that propensity is an excellence or virtue. Aristotle gives the learning of a craft as an analogy to the way one learns a virtue. Just as one becomes a carpenter primarily through building houses or as one becomes a harpist through practicing the harp, one becomes a courageous person through committing courageous actions.<sup>6</sup> The technical study of ethics, or moral philosophy, assumes that a student has a certain amount of practical learning. One needs both life experience and the ability to control passions,<sup>7</sup> but the purpose of studying moral philosophy is to live a better life through refining and clarifying the concepts with which one is already acquainted through practice.<sup>8</sup>

MacIntyre innovates Aristotle's moral epistemology in a number of ways, but he retains the practical nature of moral epistemology. According to MacIntyre, moral epistemology has three stages, and at each stage one perceives the nature of the virtuous life more deeply. MacIntyre's definition of virtue becomes more thorough at each of

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<sup>5</sup>Although one learns intellectual virtues through instruction, one learns “ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ ἐξ ἔθους.” Aristotle, *Ethica nichomachea* 1103a14-18. Thus, the science of “ethics.” For Aquinas, this acquisition applies only to the moral and intellectual virtues. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I – II, 63, 2. For the importance of practice in Aquinas's thought, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 91.

<sup>6</sup>Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1103a33-1103b5. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (n.p.: HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 1097, Kindle: “In the same way a man who perseveres in doing just actions gets in the end a certain quality of character. Now it is that quality rather than the particular actions which we mean when we talk of a ‘virtue’.”

<sup>7</sup>Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1094b29-1095a13.

<sup>8</sup>See *ibid.*, 1103b27-29 and 1179b2-5. See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *Selected Essays*, vol. 2, *Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006), 26.

these levels. One thus begins to learn virtue at the first stage, and the second and third stages lead to a progressively fuller understanding of the virtues. This section surveys each of these stage and gives the concomitant definition of virtue. The first stage of his moral epistemology is through something that MacIntyre calls a practice. MacIntyre gives the following as his specific definition of practice:

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 good involved, are systematically extended.<sup>9</sup>

The first aspect of this definition that MacIntyre explains is the concept of intrinsic goods, a concept with which he juxtaposes the concept of extrinsic goods.<sup>10</sup> Intrinsic goods are those goods that are internal to a practice. An intrinsic good in the practice of playing chess would be defeating one's opponent or taking an opponent's queen in only a few moves. Extrinsic goods are the rewards one receives from excelling in the practice. These goods have nothing to do with the nature of the practice. A trophy, money, or fame might be types of extrinsic goods of playing chess extremely well. Intrinsic goods are only definable in terms of the practice, and they require continued participation in the practice for recognition. A practice also requires criteria for merit and rules. In entering into a practice, one has to accept the authority of the present criteria and rules.<sup>11</sup>

In the context of practices, one learns the virtues, which MacIntyre defines initially as, "those qualities of mind and character without which the goods internal to

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<sup>9</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187. See also Kelvin Knight, "Practices: The Aristotelian Concept," *Analyse & Kritik* 30 (2008): 317-29.

<sup>10</sup>In the definition given above, MacIntyre calls these "goods internal to that form of activity." In MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 30, MacIntyre divides goods into "goods of excellence" and "goods of effectiveness." For the sake of clarity, I am calling these goods intrinsic goods and extrinsic goods.

<sup>11</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.

such human practices as those of the arts and the sciences and such productive activities as those of farming, fishing, and architecture cannot be achieved.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, the tendencies that allow a person to achieve intrinsic goods in a practice are virtues. Any practice requires the virtues of justice and honesty.<sup>13</sup> For instance, if someone playing chess defeats an opponent by cheating, then one is not achieving the intrinsic good of defeating one’s opponent in the practice of chess. In other words, one is not genuinely engaged in the practice if one breaks the rules. As individuals enter into practices, they learn the virtues necessary to function within those practices.

**Narrative and moral epistemology.** The second stage of MacIntyre’s moral epistemology is the narrative unity of each human life or self. Aristotle emphasizes the necessity of evaluating a human life as a whole, and as human beings come to understand their own lives as narratives, they are able to grasp moral realities more fully.<sup>14</sup> Two issues force individuals to think about themselves as narratives: rating various practices and understanding singular actions. Concerning the first issue, when a person enters a practice, that individual first assumes a role. In the practice of soccer, one becomes a soccer player. In the practice of painting, one takes the role of painter.

The various roles that individuals take forces each one to rate the goods of each practice; otherwise, participation in a practice is arbitrary. The way one evaluates the importance of a practice is through evaluating the intrinsic goods of each respective practice. MacIntyre uses the painter Paul Gauguin as an example of this type of decision:

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<sup>12</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, “An Interview with Giovanna Borradori,” in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 262. The earlier definition of virtue that MacIntyre gives in *After Virtue* is similar, but the earlier definition does not include examples of practices: “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.” MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191. Emphasis in original.

<sup>13</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 192.

<sup>14</sup>See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1098a16-19.

“Gauguin faced the question of what place the goods of painting should have in *his* life. It may have been best for Gauguin *qua* painter that he went to Tahiti. If it was, it does not follow that it was best for Gauguin *qua* human being or best for him *qua* father.”<sup>15</sup> In this example, Gauguin needed to evaluate the goods of all of his roles in order to evaluate his decision properly to go to Tahiti. In order to evaluate these goods properly, he needed to see how own life as a narrative.

The second issue that leads to understanding a single human life as a narrative is the nature of human action. MacIntyre claims that in order to understand the actions that make up practices, one needs to understand the narrative context in which the action occurs. Bodily movement is not identical to human action; the latter is a species of the former. What makes a bodily motion an action is that one can understand that motion in light of “intentions, purposes, decisions, and desires.”<sup>16</sup> Each of these concepts depends on narrative. In other words, if human beings are to be intelligible, they are inescapably diachronic. Each human life has a beginning, middle, and end; MacIntyre concludes that a human being is, therefore, “essentially a story-telling animal.”<sup>17</sup> Moral terms must reflect this narrative understanding of humanity, and MacIntyre’s second definition of virtue reflects this concept. This deeper definition is that virtues are “those qualities

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<sup>15</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Carus, 1999), 66-67. Emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (1971; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 201. See also MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206-7: “We cannot . . . characterize behavior independently of the settings which make those intentions intelligible both to agents themselves and to others. . . . a setting has a history, a history within which the histories of individual agents not only are, but have to be situated, just because without the setting and its changes through time the history of the individual agent and his changes through time will be unintelligible.”

<sup>17</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216. MacIntyre, therefore, would answer the following question affirmatively: “Is narrative an ontological notion – is story somehow basic to the human condition?” See Craig G. Bartholomew, an introduction to *A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically: A Dialogue with Oliver O’Donovan*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 15.

without which an individual cannot achieve that life, ordered in terms of those goods, which is best for her or him to achieve.”<sup>18</sup>

**Tradition and moral epistemology.** The notion of narrative leads MacIntyre to the third stage of his moral epistemology, which is the concept of tradition. Like the concept of practice, MacIntyre has a specific understanding of tradition. Moral agents enter into practices. As they participate in practices, they become aware of human excellences or virtues necessary to every practice. The participation in and evaluation of practices leads them to understand their own lives as narratives. As they begin to understand themselves as narrative units, they then can evaluate their own respective narratives in light of other narratives or in light of a larger metanarrative. Evaluating practices within this understanding then leads them either to understand their own tradition or to adopt a new tradition. Once one locates oneself within a tradition, rational moral evaluation is possible. As MacIntyre notes, “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’”<sup>19</sup> Without this overarching narrative of tradition, one lacks the context to understand oneself in a narrative form.<sup>20</sup>

Although the concept of tradition is important in *After Virtue*, MacIntyre sharpens his view of tradition in his works subsequent to *After Virtue*. For him, Thomas

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<sup>18</sup>MacIntyre, “An Interview with Giovanna Borradori,” 262-63.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. For an exposition of Edith Stein’s view concerning the particular facets of a human life that make the narrative of that life intelligible and an application to Stein’s own life, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 136-41.

<sup>20</sup>One can see the importance of narrative in MacIntyre’s comparison of Dante and Nietzsche. Dante condemned what Nietzsche praised: the affirmation of the self. Dante attempted to provide a story that explained all other stories, and Nietzsche claimed that stories are mere masks. The conflict between their moral philosophies is a conflict between their overarching stories and how stories function within those larger stories: “What is at issue here is in part the answer to the questions: in what larger story or stories, if any, is the story of each individual embedded? And in what still larger story is that story in turn embedded?” Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 144-45.

Aquinas is a prime example of how to understand morality from within a tradition.

MacIntyre, therefore, defines a tradition in the following way:

A tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted.<sup>21</sup>

Although many issues arise from this definition of tradition,<sup>22</sup> two comments are necessary for the purposes of this chapter. First, conflict is ineradicable both within particular traditions and with adherents to other traditions. Thus, societal moral disagreement confirms rather than disconfirms MacIntyre's view. Second, as in MacIntyre's definitions of narrative and practice, his definition of tradition is specific to his own moral philosophy. He rejects Burke's view of tradition, and he is not a political conservative.<sup>23</sup> Just as human moral agency is inescapably diachronic, philosophical positions are inescapably diachronic.

In MacIntyre's view, adherents to a tradition seek to go beyond what earlier thinkers of the tradition have written, yet they realize their theses and arguments only make sense in light of both the earlier internal and external debates of that same tradition.<sup>24</sup> Within this context, virtues are "those qualities without which a community cannot flourish, and there can be no adequate conception of overall human good."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 12. Cf. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.

<sup>22</sup>The issues of relativism and truth will be discussed below.

<sup>23</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221. He sardonically claims "that America has liberal conservatives and liberal radicals and liberal liberals." MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 284.

<sup>24</sup>One can see past, present, and future aspects in MacIntyre's view of how a tradition functions. He claims that "the past is never something merely to be discarded, but rather that the present is intelligible only as a commentary upon and response to the past in which the past, if necessary and if possible, is corrected and transcended, yet corrected and transcended in a way that leaves the present open to being in turn corrected and transcended by some yet more adequate future point of view." MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 146.

<sup>25</sup>MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 263.

This second point demonstrates how MacIntyre's view of tradition actually illustrates his definition of tradition. MacIntyre explicitly claims to be an Aristotelian, but Aristotle had no concept of tradition. The lack of a developed view of historical thinking prevented Aristotle from seeing the necessity of tradition. Thomas Aquinas was able to embed an Aristotelian view of the virtues within a biblical view of history. This Thomistic view of history is essential to MacIntyre's own view that narrative is basic to understanding the virtues.<sup>26</sup> His view of tradition is, therefore, closer to medieval philosophers than to Aristotle's own view. If a tradition is "an argument extended through time,"<sup>27</sup> MacIntyre sees himself along with countless other Aristotelians and Thomists as defending theses as part of the same historical argument.

**Moral epistemology and explanatory scope.** Three issues are relevant to the way that MacIntyre's moral epistemology provides explanatory scope to his moral philosophy. The first of these issues is that MacIntyre can explain failure in moral epistemology. The second issue is the relationship between MacIntyre's moral epistemology and a theory of general epistemology. The third and most significant issue is the way the narrative element in the three-stage structure of MacIntyre's moral epistemology coincides with worldview formulation and self-identity.

First, MacIntyre can explain moral epistemological failure in a way that intuitionists cannot. His moral epistemology is not susceptible to the same criticisms of intuitionism. For Moore and Craig, one simply perceives what is good.<sup>28</sup> If a moral agent

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<sup>26</sup>MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," 263. MacIntyre later claims that German philosophers of the nineteenth century, following Vico, were the first to realize their own dependence on their philosophical precursors. Although MacIntyre does not explicitly name any of these philosophers, one may assume that Hegel is a primary member of this group. See MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 252.

<sup>27</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 12.

<sup>28</sup>See G. E. Moore, "The Indefinability of Good," in *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy: Readings from Classical and Contemporary Sources*, ed. Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 322, and William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 181.

disagrees with Moore or Craig about what is good, then that moral agent's intuition is simply not working properly. For MacIntyre, when a person fails to perceive what is good, that failure arises from a failure at one or multiple levels of his three-stage approach. Perhaps the moral agent never acquired the virtues that practices require, or the moral agent never viewed his or her own life as a narrative whole. At whatever stage a failure occurred, MacIntyre is still able to provide a process of both failure and success.

**Moral epistemology and scientific epistemology.** The second area in which MacIntyre's view provides explanatory scope is that he connects his moral epistemology with epistemology in general. An issue that a moral philosopher needs to address is the relationship between how one comes to know moral truths with how one comes to know truth at all.<sup>29</sup> MacIntyre's answer to this question is similar to his answer to the question concerning how scientists arrive a scientific truth.<sup>30</sup> On the one hand, he attempts to reconcile what the historians of science have discovered concerning about the apparently irrational way that science proceeds. On the other hand, he attempts to explain the history of science without claiming, like Thomas Kuhn does, that the process is ultimately irrational.<sup>31</sup>

Kuhn claims that Einsteinian physics and Aristotelian physics are closer to one another than either is to Newtonian physics. He concludes that in terms of the transitions

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<sup>29</sup>Those who are not moral realists would obviously not need to address this issue.

<sup>30</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *Selected Essays*, vol. 1, *The Tasks of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3-23. MacIntyre also uses the same framework for color recognition. See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Colors, Cultures, and Practices," in *The Tasks of Philosophy*, 24-51. Although he does not explicitly mention Moore, one may compare MacIntyre's approach to how humans recognize colors with Moore's analogy between recognizing goodness and recognizing the color yellow.

<sup>31</sup>Hence, in Kuhn's view, a scientist promoting a new paradigm must proceed with a Kierkegaardian faith: "The man who embraces a new paradigm at an early stage must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving. He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few. A decision of that kind can only be made on faith." Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 158.

between Aristotelian, Newtonian, and Einsteinian physics, one “can see in their succession no coherent direction of ontological development.”<sup>32</sup> For Kuhn, Einstein’s view is not any truer to extramental reality than Aristotle’s view. MacIntyre counters that without the questions Newtonian physics raises, Einstein’s theories are not plausible: “A history which moved from Aristotelianism directly to relativistic physics is not an imaginable history.”<sup>33</sup> The relationship between Aristotle, Newton, and Einstein is the type of relationship one can only have in a narrative. Without Newton’s questions, Einstein’s answers are unintelligible even if they are more similar to Aristotle’s view than to Newton’s view. Thus, when one understands the narrative nature of the relationships between scientific traditions, one is able to maintain the apparently spasmodic progression of scientific frameworks without relinquishing the idea of ontological truth.

The important point is not to defend the particulars of MacIntyre’s philosophy of science. The point is, rather, that MacIntyre utilizes the same basic method in arriving at moral truths as he does scientific truths. Fruitfulness in one method leads to fruitfulness in another method. Moral epistemology is, therefore, in MacIntyre’s view, not a particular realm with particular rules and particular realities. Moral epistemology is one species within the genus of epistemology.

**The ubiquity of narrative.** A third way in which MacIntyre’s moral epistemology provides his view with explanatory scope is specific to his account of narrative. Although the narrative understanding of a single human life is the second stage of his moral epistemology, narrative also frames the nature of the way he sees tradition in the third stage. This view coincides with narrative methods of understanding beyond moral epistemology. Narrative methods of understanding are ubiquitous in human

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<sup>32</sup>Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 206.

<sup>33</sup>MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,” 21.

culture, and in recent decades a vast number of scholars have recognized the role of narrative in disciplines like philosophy,<sup>34</sup> theology,<sup>35</sup> biblical studies,<sup>36</sup> and Christian ethics.<sup>37</sup> Personality psychology, moreover, is a school of psychology in which psychologists argue that personal narrative is fundamental for humans to develop and maintain a sense of self-identity.<sup>38</sup>

If the general arguments of proponents of narrative in each respective discipline are sound, then MacIntyre's moral epistemology coincides with their approaches. If narrative is fundamental in understanding reality, theology, Scripture, Christian ethics, or one's own self-identity, then one would certainly expect narrative to be an indispensable way of understanding moral truth. Even without assuming the soundness of the arguments of the above proponents of the importance of narrative,<sup>39</sup> an

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<sup>34</sup>For the purposes of this dissertation, the most significant is Paul Ricoeur's work in philosophy. See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols., trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-88). Ricoeur applies his view of hermeneutic to all facets of human existence. As G. B. Madison notes, "Ricoeur has developed his theory of the narrative function primarily with respect to historiography, but it can be, and has been, extended to other human sciences. . . . Ricoeur advances this claim even further when, in his later writings, he maintains that the object of hermeneutics is *textuality*, and that this notion is coextensive with human existence itself." Emphasis in original. G. B. Madison, "Hermeneutics: Gadamer and Ricoeur," in *Continental Philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Richard Kearney (London: Routledge, 1994), 332. For a phenomenological argument, see Stephen D. Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39 (1971): 291-311.

<sup>35</sup>Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview," *Interpretation* 37 (1983): 340-52.

<sup>36</sup>Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), and Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

<sup>37</sup>Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 17-34. For a rapprochement of narrative ethics and a Reformed ethic, see Richard J. Mouw, *The God Who Commands* (1990; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 116-49.

<sup>38</sup>Dan P. McAdams, *The Stories We Live by: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self* (New York: Guilford, 1993). For the relationship between a sense of moral failure and the construction of personal narratives, see Daniel K. Lapsley, "Moral Agency, Identity and Narrative in Moral Development," *Human Development* 53 (2010): 87-97. For the relationship of narrative and the development of self-identity in children, see Matthew Keefe Mulvaney, "Narrative Processes across Childhood," *Early Child Development and Care* 181 (2011):1153-61.

<sup>39</sup>For a rejection of narrative theology, see Carl F. H. Henry, "Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 3-19. For a response, see Hans W. Frei, "Response to 'Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal,'" *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 21-24.

additional area provides further support for MacIntyre's moral epistemology: the relationship of narrative to worldview. Folklorists like Linda Dégh have shown that narrative is so common across human cultures that they have coined the term *homo narrans*.<sup>40</sup> They note that narrative is particularly essential in understanding and articulating worldviews, and to understand the worldview of a culture, one must understand the narratives of that culture.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the work of folklorists, David Naugle and N. T. Wright incorporate narrative into their definitions of worldview. Naugle defines a worldview as “a semiotic system of narrative signs that creates the definitive symbolic universe, which is responsible in the main for the shape of a variety of life-determining human practices.”<sup>42</sup> For Wright, moreover, a worldview is “a combination of praxis, story, symbol and theory, which give rise to, and are expressed within, a set of aims and motives on the one hand and of specific beliefs, at various levels, on the other.”<sup>43</sup> Of these four components of a worldview, Wright gives special emphasis to the importance of narrative: “Narrative is the most characteristic expression of worldview, going deeper than the isolated observation or fragmented remark.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Linda Dégh notes, “In the course of discussions, folk narrative stock has broadened considerably, because field collectors recording community repertoires found a greater diversity in narratives than previously noted. Observed live narration led to the introduction of the concept *homo narrans*: the idea that the *homo sapiens, faber, and ludens*, is by nature also a narrator.” See Linda Dégh, “The Approach to Worldview in Folk Narrative Study,” *Western Folklore* 53 (1994): 245. David Naugle uses the term *homo narrator*. See David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 299.

<sup>41</sup>Dégh claims that worldview “permeates all cultural performances, including folklore. Narratives, in particular, are loaded with worldview expressions: they reveal inherited communal and personal views of human conduct – this is their generic goal.” Dégh, “The Approach to Worldview in Folk Narrative Study,” 247. Alan Dundes claims that folk ideas are the building blocks to the worldview of a culture and that to understand a worldview, one must examine the folk ideas that occur in forms like folk narratives. See Alan Dundes, “Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 93-103.

<sup>42</sup>Naugle, *Worldview*, 330. For Naugle's defense of narrative in his definition of worldview, see *ibid.*, 297-303.

<sup>43</sup>N. T. Wright, “Paul and Caesar: A New Reading of Romans,” in *A Royal Priesthood?*, 181.

<sup>44</sup>N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 123.

If narrative is fundamental to one's worldview, then one would expect narrative to be essential in acquiring moral knowledge. MacIntyre's moral epistemology fulfills that expectation, and this fulfillment extends the explanatory scope of his moral philosophy. One comes to know moral truth in the same way that one comes to understand oneself and one's worldview: through seeing one's own life as a narrative within a larger narrative.

### **Vulnerability and Rationality**

The previous chapter contains the claim that human animality provides MacIntyre's moral philosophy with explanatory scope in the sense that MacIntyre can demonstrate the continuity of the self. The claim in this chapter is that a significant aspect of human animality in MacIntyre's view is vulnerability, and human vulnerability provides MacIntyre with considerable explanatory scope for his moral philosophy. Unlike the issues in the previous chapter, this aspect is one in which MacIntyre differs from Aristotle. One must, therefore, explain how MacIntyre departed from Aristotle and accepted a Christian position.

Even before becoming a Thomist or a Christian, MacIntyre claimed that although the biblical ethic of the New Testament differs drastically from Aristotle's own thought, the teleological nature of Aristotle's thought is similar to a New Testament ethic. MacIntyre notes two basic similarities:

The New Testament's account of the virtues, even if it differs as much as it does in content from Aristotle's – Aristotle would certainly not have admired Jesus Christ and he would have been horrified by St Paul – does have the same logical and conceptual structure as Aristotle's account. A virtue is, as with Aristotle, a quality the exercise of which leads to the achievement of the human *telos*. . . . Moreover the relationship of virtues as means to the end which is human incorporation in the divine kingdom of the age to come is internal and not external, just as it is in Aristotle.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 184. For an overview of virtues and vices in the New Testament, see J. D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1252-57. For a sampling of texts, see Matt 5:3-10, Gal 5:22-23, 2 Cor 6:6-7, Eph 6:14-17, Phil 4:8, Col 3:12-14, 1 Tim 3:2-3, 6:11, Titus 1:7-8,

The first similarity is, therefore, the way in which both the New Testament and *Nicomachean Ethics* contain important lists of virtues in which the virtues are subsidiary to a more fundamental end. Christlikeness is more fundamental than any individual virtue in the New Testament, and the common good is more basic than any individual virtue in Aristotle. The second way in which the ethical structure of the New Testament is similar the ethical structure of Aristotle's view is that the virtues in each require an internalization of morality. In the New Testament, right action must come from the mindset of Christ, and Aristotle emphasizes the fact that the virtuous individual must feel the appropriate emotions.<sup>46</sup>

In light of the structural similarity of Aristotle's view with the New Testament, when MacIntyre became a Thomist, he retained a teleological understanding of human nature. Virtues are important, but virtues are subsidiary to ends. Even if, however, someone accepts MacIntyre's comparison of the structure of New Testament ethics and Aristotelian ethics, the discrepancies between the lists are significant to anyone who reads both Aristotle's ethical texts and the New Testament. The most jarring difference between the ethics of the New Testament and the ethics of Aristotle is when one compares Aristotle's teaching on *μεγαλοψυχία* with the New Testament teaching on *ταπεινοφροσύνη*. The possessor of Aristotelian *μεγαλοψυχία* both claims to be and is worthy. He<sup>47</sup> disdains recognition from common people and looks down on them. A person who claims less honor than he deserves is, according to Aristotle, vicious.<sup>48</sup>

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Jas 3:17, and 2 Pet 1:5-8.

<sup>46</sup>See Phil 2:3-11. For Aristotle's primary list, see Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1119b21-1128b36. For the internalization of virtue, see *ibid.*, 1104b4-10. For the relationship between the *μεγαλόψυχος* and the common people, see *ibid.*, 1124a10-11 and 1124b4-5.

<sup>47</sup>The *μεγαλόψυχος* is never female.

<sup>48</sup>For Aristotle's portrayal of *μεγαλοψυχία*, see Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1123a34-1125a29. For the claim of worth, see *ibid.*, 1123b2. For the Aristotle's claims concerning the *μικρόψυχος*, see *ibid.*, 1123b10-13.

From the perspective of the New Testament, this “virtue” is a vice.<sup>49</sup> As John Hare notes, for Aristotle, as for the other major ancient Greek philosophers, “there is no comparable idea of self-sacrifice, either human or divine.”<sup>50</sup> Hare contrasts Aristotle’s view of the free man with Jesus’ comment on the widow who places her two coins in the temple treasury: “In Aristotle’s scheme, the poor widow is not generous but stupid – she simply cannot afford the gift. . . . In Aristotle it is impossible for either women or the poor to be fully virtuous.”<sup>51</sup> The issue, then, for MacIntyre is whether his departure from Aristotle at this point is arbitrary or whether he can find a philosophical basis to prefer the content of the Christian virtues over the content of the Aristotelian virtues.

**Human vulnerability and empirical support.** Subsequent to MacIntyre’s conversion, his most significant departure from Aristotle was in his view of human self-sufficiency. He instead adopts Aquinas’s view of the virtues.<sup>52</sup> MacIntyre does not, however, simply appeal to Aquinas or the New Testament in order to develop a theological ethic. He makes an argument that relies on empirical facts of human life. He grounds his view of human vulnerability in his concept of human animality. As chapter 2 of this dissertation states, for MacIntyre humans are a category of animals. They never lose their “animal comportment.”<sup>53</sup> Both the capacity for practical rationality and the use

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<sup>49</sup>The death and suffering of Jesus are not the primary stumbling blocks from Aristotle’s perspective. The *μεγαλόψυχος* is willingly to die for worthy causes. *Ibid.*, 1124b7-9. The willing embrace of shame, suffering, and humiliation that both the narratives in the gospels and epistles provides is the opposite of the Aristotelian content in the passages that the previous footnote cites. For a few examples, see Mark 15:33-34, Luke 14:11, John 13:1-17, and Phil 2:5-11.

<sup>50</sup>John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 77. Although the *μεγαλόψυχος* is willing to suffer, the honor he gains makes the suffering not sacrificial.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 78. See Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:4.

<sup>52</sup>Hare notes also how the New Testament influenced Aquinas’s perspective: Aquinas “also agrees that intellectual contemplation of God is the central component of the highest good. But even in the detailed treatment of the virtues, for example magnanimity, it is fascinating to see how differently [than Aristotle] he treats them by bringing them into contact with the model of the life of Christ and with the Christian virtue of humility.” Hare, *God and Morality*, 86.

<sup>53</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 49. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.*, I, 75, 4.

of language allow humans to surpass the abilities of other animals, but both the use of language and practical rationality depend in a number of ways on biological aspects of being human.

The abilities of language and practical rationality only arise through the guidance and help of others. Many developmental failures exist that preclude humans from exercising moral agency. Adults must help children to avoid life-threatening dangers and a number of morally debilitating conditions: “failure to provide adequate stimulus to brain activity, mental retardation, autism, anxiety-engendering insecurity, conditions that render a child unable to control its aggression, too much fear, [and] insufficient hopefulness.”<sup>54</sup> Disabilities of various kinds also prevent humans from exercising types of moral agency, but the activities of other individuals often determine the amount of moral agency one exercises. MacIntyre notes that

when, often inescapably, we do fall victim, either temporarily or permanently, to such conditions as those of blindness, deafness, crippling injury, debilitating disease, or psychological disorder, we need others to sustain us, to help us in obtaining needed, often scarce, resources, to help us discover what new ways forward there may be, and to stand in our place from time to time, doing on our behalf what we cannot do for ourselves.<sup>55</sup>

The loss of physical abilities can and does keep humans from becoming practically rational. A severely mentally disabled individual is unable to become practically rational, and an elderly individual with severe dementia is also unable to be practically rational. Every practically rational individual is apt to lose the necessary characteristics of moral agency and is, therefore, vulnerable and essentially dependent.

The reliance on others that every moral agent requires is asymmetrical. Dependence on others characterizes the beginning and ending of individual human lives, but dependence also marks certain extended periods in the middle of the lives of many as

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<sup>54</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 72.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

well. MacIntyre concludes that in order to flourish, humans must expect both to give and to receive care. For each moral agent, MacIntyre notes, “what I am called to give may be quite disproportionate to what I have received and . . . those to whom I am called upon to give may well be those from whom I shall receive nothing.”<sup>56</sup> Moral agency, therefore, requires a “network of relationships of giving and receiving.”<sup>57</sup>

**Vulnerability and explanatory scope.** This view of human vulnerability and dependence provides MacIntyre’s moral philosophy with two major benefits regarding explanatory scope. First, he is able to provide empirical support for a Christian and Thomistic view of the virtues instead of Aristotle’s view of the virtues. This choice, therefore, is not an arbitrary choice. Second, he is able to incorporate facets of human existence that other moral philosophers require for their own views.

MacIntyre calls the virtues that are necessary to sustain these moral networks “virtues of acknowledged dependence.”<sup>58</sup> The most important of these virtues is the virtue of “just generosity.”<sup>59</sup> This virtue corresponds to Aquinas’s view of the virtues of *miser cordia*, *liberalitas*, and *beneficentia*.<sup>60</sup> Just generosity is the tendency to give asymmetrically, and the vulnerability of human animality means that human beings require the asymmetrical commitment of others in order to come to the point where they can exercise moral agency. Just generosity extends both to the community and beyond the community to the stranger. MacIntyre defines *miser cordia* as “grief or sorrow over someone else’s distress . . . just insofar as one understands the other’s distress as one’s

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<sup>56</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 108.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>60</sup>For Aquinas’s views on each of these virtues respectively, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* II-II, 30; II-II, 117; and II-II, 32.

own.”<sup>61</sup> This virtue “has regard to urgent and extreme need without respect of persons.”<sup>62</sup> Since human vulnerability means that most humans encounter situations in which they desperately need the help of strangers, those who demonstrate just generosity in general and *misericordia* in particular help support and sustain practical rationality and human flourishing. MacIntyre’s argument for and defense of human animality thus provides further grounding for the kind of virtues one sees in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

MacIntyre’s portrait of human vulnerability provides a critique of an Aristotelian view of μεγαλοψυχία. The vulnerable, dependent nature of humanity precludes any genuine self-sufficiency. MacIntyre could provide a rejoinder to Aristotle in the sense that every worthy man needs a woman who was willing to nurse an infant.<sup>63</sup> The μεγαλόψυχος is, therefore, living in an illusion. MacIntyre comments, “We recognize here an illusion of self-sufficiency, an illusion apparently shared by Aristotle, that is all too characteristic of the rich and powerful in many times and places, an illusion that plays its part in excluding them from certain types of communal relationship.”<sup>64</sup>

This view of human vulnerability and dependency explains aspects of human existence that other philosophers both presuppose and yet neglect. One may use a variety of examples. In each of these cases, the primary moral unit is a rational individual. In MacIntyre’s view, the primary moral unit is dependent, and human vulnerability is more basic than human rationality. First, the existence of utilitarians who apply Bentham’s felicity calculus requires years of parental care and education.<sup>65</sup> Second, Kant defines his

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<sup>61</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 125.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* I.vi.7.

<sup>64</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 127. See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1124b9-18. D. S. Hutchinson summarizes this Aristotelian character in the following way: “He will behave in a dignified way that expresses his awareness of his own superiority to others. He will expect them to respect him and obey him, because he deserves the greatest things, namely respect and political authority.” D. S. Hutchinson, “Ethics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 227.

<sup>65</sup>The primary problem for utilitarianism for MacIntyre is that one cannot remain a consistent

kingdom of ends as “a systematic union of different rational beings under common laws.”<sup>66</sup> David Gauthier, a contractarian, also limits the moral community to rational individuals. He states, “In a community of rational and informed persons, each member has adequate reason to follow the precepts of a sound morality, even when doing so is contrary to his desires, needs, and interests.”<sup>67</sup> John Rawls’s thought experiment behind his veil of ignorance requires the reader to imagine that the individuals in his society are rational.<sup>68</sup>

MacIntyre does not attempt to refute utilitarianism on the basis of human vulnerability; he claims that utilitarians, Kantians, and others simply do not take into account the fact that human vulnerability is a central facet of human existence.<sup>69</sup> Moral thought requires the brain to work properly. If the lives of Socrates, Seneca, and Descartes demonstrate how societal and biological conditions highlight the role that vulnerability plays toward the end of life, then one may assume that the societal and biological conditions at the beginning of one’s life, likewise, determine the potential of one’s moral development during the early stages of one’s life. MacIntyre provides a moral philosophy that accounts for human dependency.

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utilitarian and make an unconditional promise as in the case of a parent to a child. For this point, see Alasdair MacIntyre and Alex Voorhoeve, “The Illusion of Self-Sufficiency,” in *Conversations on Ethics*, ed. Alex Voorhoeve (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 116. This argument is not the argument I am making here. I am only claiming that utilitarians experienced the type of vulnerability that MacIntyre recognizes.

<sup>66</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (1956; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 100.

<sup>67</sup>David Gauthier, “Reason to be Moral?,” *Synthese* 72 (1987): 25.

<sup>68</sup>John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” in *Classics of Philosophy*, ed. Louis P. Pojman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1250.

<sup>69</sup>MacIntyre admits that neither Kantians nor utilitarians “should suppose that I believe that I have provided anything remotely approaching a refutation of their views. What I have issued is rather an invitation: to show how from each of their standpoints due place can be given to the facts about animality, disability and vulnerability and the need to acknowledge these.” MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, xii.

## Criticisms

The primary aim of this chapter and the previous chapter is to establish that MacIntyre's moral philosophy has significant explanatory scope. Claiming that a moral theory has explanatory scope does not require one to defend a position against all objections. An initial plausibility is necessary. A number of critics claim that MacIntyre has misunderstood Aristotle, Aquinas, or the Protestant Reformers.<sup>70</sup> If MacIntyre errs at these points, his theory does not necessarily fail. Other criticisms, however, are more significant, and the person who claims that MacIntyre's philosophy contains considerable explanatory scope needs to respond to objections that concern fundamental aspects of his philosophy.

## Relativism

One of the most significant criticisms of MacIntyre's view is that MacIntyre is a relativist. This charge arises because of the relationship that MacIntyre sees between history and truth. A generation before MacIntyre, R. G. Collingwood had argued for the essentiality of understanding the historical context of thinkers, and MacIntyre follows this type of thinking.<sup>71</sup> Collingwood claims, for example, that metaphysics is both "the attempt to discover what the people of that time believe about the world's general nature" and "the attempt to discover the corresponding presuppositions of other peoples and other

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<sup>70</sup>Martha Nussbaum claims that MacIntyre misrepresents Aristotle. See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Recoiling from Reason," *New York Review of Books*, December 7, 1989, 42. For the claim that MacIntyre's moral philosophy is incompatible with key features of Thomism, see Robert P. George, "Moral Particularism, Thomism, and Traditions," *Review of Metaphysics* 42 (1989): 599-600. For the accusation that MacIntyre misrepresents Luther and Calvin, see Richard J. Mouw, "Alasdair MacIntyre on Reformation Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 13 (1985): 243-57.

<sup>71</sup>Patrick Zoll rightly notes that MacIntyre does not sufficiently cite R. G. Collingwood. See Patrick Zoll, "How to Proceed Philosophically? A Critique of Alasdair MacIntyre's Narrative-Historicist Conception of Progress," *Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011): 111n35. For a comparison of some of the ideas of MacIntyre's thought with Collingwood's view of history, see R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 63, and MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 122. For an explicit acknowledgement and engagement with Collingwood, see MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, 161.

times, and to follow the historical process by which one set of presuppositions has turned into another.”<sup>72</sup>

The problem for MacIntyre is that Collingwood’s view leads to a type of relativism. Collingwood claims that deciding historically whose view of the universe is true is not an issue that one can responsibly address.<sup>73</sup> Like Collingwood, MacIntyre claims that one cannot encounter truth ahistorically. Whereas Collingwood claims that one always has absolute presuppositions, MacIntyre claims that one comes to the truth from the perspective of a tradition.<sup>74</sup> MacIntyre’s definition of rationality, moreover, reflects his historicism. Rationality for MacIntyre is “tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive.”<sup>75</sup> In other words, his theory is both about tradition and within a tradition. The charge against MacIntyre is that if moral theorists cannot formulate theories outside of any tradition, no universal perspective is available. If no universal perspective is available, then no way exists to adjudicate between traditions. Hence, relativism follows.

**Historicism and relativism.** Robert George, a fellow Thomist, makes this accusation against MacIntyre. He claims that MacIntyre’s responses to earlier charges of relativism were insufficient.<sup>76</sup> George alleges that MacIntyre encounters a dilemma. On the one hand, MacIntyre rejects the view that rationality and justice are neutral concepts:

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<sup>72</sup>Collingwood, *An Autobiography*, 66.

<sup>73</sup>Collingwood states, “The question what presuppositions underlie the ‘physics’ or natural science of a certain people at a certain time is as purely historical a question as what kind of clothes they wear. And this is the question that metaphysicians have to answer. It is not their business to raise the further question whether, among the various beliefs on this subject that various peoples hold and have held, this one and that one is true. This question, when raised, would always be found, as it has always been found, unanswerable.” See *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 66-67. For a comparison between Collingwood’s concept of absolute presuppositions and MacIntyre’s view of tradition, see Naugle, *Worldviews*, 307-9.

<sup>75</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 390.

<sup>76</sup>George, “Moral Particularism, Thomism, and Traditions,” 594-95. For earlier charges of relativism, see Robert Wachbroit, “A Genealogy of Virtues,” *Yale Law Journal* 92 (1983): 564-76, and Robert Wachbroit, “Relativism and Virtue,” *Yale Law Journal* 94 (1985): 1559-65.

“it is an illusion to suppose that there is some neutral standing ground, some locus for rationality as such, which can afford rational resources sufficient for enquiry independent of all traditions.”<sup>77</sup> Everyone, therefore, inhabits some tradition. On the other hand, MacIntyre attempts to persuade the individual who is outside of all traditions.<sup>78</sup> According to George, MacIntyre expects, therefore, both no one and the reader of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* to be without a tradition. Without a tradition, moreover, no standards of rationality are available. George thus claims that MacIntyre’s argument is unable “to avoid a fundamental and decisive relativism.”<sup>79</sup> He alleges, moreover, that the denial of universal moral principles entails relativism:

If someone standing apart from any tradition cannot, as MacIntyre supposes he cannot, grasp any sound principles of practical rationality and justice, neither, it would seem, could such an individual be capable of sufficient self-understanding to render his choice among the range of traditions confronting him anything other than arbitrary.<sup>80</sup>

One may respond to George in two ways. First, a more consistent way of interpreting MacIntyre at this point is that MacIntyre addresses the content of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* toward the person who is unconsciously liberal. Liberalism, according to MacIntyre, explicitly rejects all traditions, but MacIntyre argues that liberalism has become a tradition.<sup>81</sup> The appeal would be, in this view, to the reader who accepts the tenet of liberalism that philosophical thought excludes tradition. The reader then comes to see, through MacIntyre’s argument, that the reader accepts the fundamental tenets of liberalism. The reader is then faced with the choice to remain within the anti-

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<sup>77</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 367.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>79</sup>George, “Moral Particularism, Thomism, and Traditions,” 599. Later, George admits that this type of relativism is not a strong relativism, by which he evidently means that some standards of truth exist in MacIntyre’s view. See *ibid.*, 602.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>81</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 326-48.

traditionalist tradition of liberalism or consider the claims of MacIntyre's version of Thomism. In other words, the purpose of the book is to present the reader with an "epistemological crisis."<sup>82</sup>

George admits that this interpretation is possible, but he responds that this interpretation does not eradicate the dilemma. According to George, in MacIntyre's view, "Traditions cannot provide one with such standards unless and until one commits oneself to a particular tradition."<sup>83</sup> Without a commitment, one has no standards, and without standards of rationality that are independent of traditions, no rational way of adjudicating between traditions is available. In MacIntyre's view, however, a commitment to a tradition is not necessarily an explicit act. As individuals respond to specific dilemmas, they do not always respond in premeditated ways. They come to understand their own beliefs and positions in light of the dilemmas they encounter. In MacIntyre's own case, he claims that he realized that he was an Aristotelian. As he encountered the difficulties of Kantianism and utilitarianism, he realized he had Aristotelian assumptions:

If moral theories articulate the presuppositions and concepts that are embodied in our everyday judgements, then one interesting way to begin our enquiries in moral philosophy is to ask ourselves what it is to which we are already committed by our everyday life and our everyday judgements. This is often not an easy question to answer, especially if you inhabit the morally fragmented culture of modernity. But when I began to ask myself this question, I discovered quite soon that I was and had been – without knowing it – an Aristotelian. For when I identified more precisely the reasons why I had rejected both utilitarianism and Kantianism, it became clear that those reasons stemmed from Aristotelian attitudes.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>For an explanation of this concept, see MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 3-23.

<sup>83</sup>George, "Moral Particularism, Thomism, and Traditions," 601-2. For a defense of the view that standards of rationality are based on commitment to a worldview, see Naugle, *Worldview*, 303-10.

<sup>84</sup>MacIntyre and Voorhoeve, "The Illusion of Self-Sufficiency," 117. MacIntyre uses the language of *ἀγών* to describe the "ideological encounter" that all reflective individuals experience. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 393.

The type of commitment to which George refers need not, as George assumes, be explicit. MacIntyre is attempting to convince individuals who do not realize that they adhere to an incoherent tradition to abandon that tradition for a coherent tradition.

**Relativism and truth.** MacIntyre also provides a more general defense against the charge of moral relativism by claiming that moral disagreements presuppose a concept of truth. If relativism is true, then adherents of opposite traditions do not actually disagree.<sup>85</sup> Each tradition sets forth a definition of truth. MacIntyre defends the Thomistic definition of truth: *adaequatio rei et intellectus*.<sup>86</sup> He claims, moreover, that this definition is more robust than the definitions of those who claim that truth is a property of propositions.<sup>87</sup>

In summary, while MacIntyre does set forth a type of historicism, he both rejects relativism and defends his own view against the charges of relativism. He defends a Thomistic version of truth.<sup>88</sup> Whether MacIntyre is successful against every charge of relativism is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but no *prima facie* reason exists for rejecting MacIntyre's moral philosophy on account of relativism.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, 209.

<sup>86</sup>MacIntyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy*, 185. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I, 16, 1, and Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate* I. Aquinas wrongly attributes this definition to Isaac Israeli. See John F. Wippel, "Truth in Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 43 (1989): 311. Alvin Plantinga argues that the theistic background to this view of truth provides grounding for inductive reasoning. See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4103-10, Kindle.

<sup>87</sup>MacIntyre refers primarily to nominalism and pragmatism. See MacIntyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy*, 190-92.

<sup>88</sup>For the claim that Thomas Aquinas was both a historicist and an absolutist regarding truth, see Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas and Historicity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1979).

<sup>89</sup>Robert Stern, likewise, claims that MacIntyre's historicism is a "non-skeptical form of relativism." Stern differentiates between MacIntyre's historicism and relativistic forms of historicism like that of Richard Rorty and Michel Foucault. See Robert Stern, "MacIntyre and Historicism," in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 146-60. For the term "non-skeptical form of relativism," see *ibid.*, 147.

## Natural Law and Moral Disagreement

As a Thomist, MacIntyre is a natural law theorist. MacIntyre approvingly accepts Thomas Aquinas's view of law: "the precepts of law are precepts of reason directed toward the common good enacted and promulgated by someone with authority to do so."<sup>90</sup> MacIntyre also follows Aquinas in holding to the view that natural law is the participation of human beings in the eternal law of God through reason.<sup>91</sup> Critics of natural law theory maintain that either natural law proponents claim agreement on the content of natural law where no such agreement exists or that the agreement is vacuous. For example, Michael Banner notes that "the claims of natural law are, where uncontroversial, uninteresting and where interesting, controversial."<sup>92</sup> In other words, natural law theorists disagree about the precise content of the natural law, and one would not expect such disagreement if the natural law is as accessible as natural law theorists claim.

In addition to the common criticism against natural law, MacIntyre faces a difficulty that is more significant than the difficulties that other natural law theorists face. MacIntyre claims that the moral disagreement in late modernity is broader and deeper than other moral philosophers claim. A major facet of moral debate in contemporary culture, according to MacIntyre, is incommensurability. He claims that in moral debates

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<sup>90</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 88. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 90, 4. For a fuller treatment of Aquinas's ethic, see MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 183-208.

<sup>91</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 88-92. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 91, 2.

<sup>92</sup>Michael Banner, *Christian Ethics: A Brief History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 51. His specific example is the way people differ on what they think taking innocent human life means. He notes the disagreements between people who still would object to the taking of innocent human life: "Some of them would expose unwanted children; some put the aged outside the camp to fend for themselves; some will engage in ethnic cleansing; some will practice euthanasia; some will allow abortion on demand; some will make use of capital punishment; some will believe in total war; and some will be pacifists. Thus the claim that killing is wrong is one which wins wide support while leaving unsettled the very issues which most concern us – and on these issues, the claim to establish such and such a conclusion as demanded by reason would be highly contentious." Ibid.

“the rival premises are such that we possess no rational way of weighing the claims of one as against the other.”<sup>93</sup> Jeffrey Stout rightly summarizes MacIntyre’s view:

The moral concepts we use, deprived of the contexts in which they formerly made sense, have become merely means of expressing our feelings and manipulating others. Where once there was coherent discourse on the virtues and the common good, we now have the assertion of arbitrary wills, masked by moral fictions, managed by bureaucrats.<sup>94</sup>

If MacIntyre’s assessment of contemporary moral discourse and language is accurate, then Aquinas’s assertion that “the natural law in general can in no way be excised from the hearts of human beings”<sup>95</sup> seems highly implausible.

**Specific criticisms of natural law.** Critics of natural law claim that a number of factors make natural law untenable.<sup>96</sup> Each of the following objections, according to detractors of natural law theory, is a cause for significant moral disagreement. First, David Bentley Hart claims that before one knows what natural law is, one must know what nature is. He states that “we cannot talk intelligibly about natural law if we have not all first agreed upon what nature is and accept in advance that there really is a necessary bond between what is and what should be.”<sup>97</sup> For Hart, nature simply does not reveal the information necessary for moral discourse. Carl Henry applies this ambiguity specifically

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<sup>93</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 8.

<sup>94</sup>Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 191. Stout is summarizing the first nine chapters of *After Virtue*. For MacIntyre’s own argument, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 1-120.

<sup>95</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, ed. William P. Baumgarth and Richard J. Regan, trans. Richard J. Regan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), 50. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 94, 6.

<sup>96</sup>For the sake of space, I address only three objections. For a list of a number of objections, see Carl F. H. Henry, “Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture,” *First Things* 49 (1995): 54. J. Budziszewski lists and responds to thirteen objections. See J. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 208-12.

<sup>97</sup>David Bentley Hart, “Is, Ought, and Nature’s Laws,” *First Things* 231 (2013): 71.

to human nature. Because of evolutionary theory, human nature for most moderns is a concept that is too fluid to serve as a stable premise for a moral argument.<sup>98</sup>

A second objection is that the human will exhibits a propensity toward evil; recognition of moral obligations, therefore, requires supernatural aid.<sup>99</sup> A third problem is the most significant problem. According to critics of natural law, natural law assumes that morality does not transcend nature. Critics of natural law allege that moral imperatives must transcend nature. If imperatives are to transcend nature, moreover, one cannot derive them from nature.<sup>100</sup> John Hare calls this problem “deductivism,” which he defines as the belief “that the moral precepts can be *deduced* from true statements about human nature.”<sup>101</sup> Hart, furthermore, alleges, “Consistent natural law cases can be made for or against slavery, for example, or for or against capital punishment, depending on which values one has privileged at a level too elementary for philosophy to adjudicate.”<sup>102</sup> Without a transcendent standard, one can argue in any direction. According to the critics of natural law theory, each of these three criticisms leads to moral disagreement.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Henry, “Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture,” 59.

<sup>99</sup>See *ibid.* and Hart, “Is, Ought, and Nature’s Laws,” 71.

<sup>100</sup>Hart quips, “What do we owe to nature?” Hart, “Is, Ought, and Nature’s Laws,” 71. Both Hart and Henry claim that special divine revelation is necessary for morality. For Henry, law has no force without “recognizing anew the Divine Valuator and a recovery of the *imago dei*.” Henry, “Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture,” 60.

<sup>101</sup>John E. Hare, *God’s Call: Moral Realism, God’s Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 54. Italics in original.

<sup>102</sup>David Bentley Hart, “Nature Loves to Hide,” *First Things* 233 (2013): 71.

<sup>103</sup>John Hare’s criticisms of Aristotle and Larry Arnhart apply to certain natural law theorists like MacIntyre. Like Hart, Hare argues that one can legitimately argue from nature to defend slavery: “Aristotle thinks that some humans simply do not have the kind of rational self-control that makes ruling or freedom appropriate, and that is especially distinctive of human life. More deeply, humans by nature desire wealth, power over others, and high social status. Here Aristotle and Arnhart are in agreement. For Aristotle, as for Arnhart, the human good includes wealth and power and status. I think that Aristotle is for the most part right about the desires we are born with. He is not right, however, in the inference to the human good. We do naturally desire these things, but it does not follow from the fact that we desire them that they are good.” Hare, *God and Morality*, 69.

**Natural law according to MacIntyre.** MacIntyre acknowledges the problem that moral disagreement appears to bring to natural law theories.<sup>104</sup> In light of this problem, contemporary natural law theorists must provide an explanation of moral disagreement in their views of natural law.<sup>105</sup> MacIntyre responds that the culture of advanced modernity rests on an individualistic perspective that is uncommon in human history. Members of advanced modernity view human beings “not as a web of familial and communal relationships, but as a set of individuals to each of whom everyone else is an ‘other’.”<sup>106</sup> In this situation, individuals must weigh whether or not the concerns of the “other” are more important than the concerns of the self. No rational way, according to MacIntyre, exists to adjudicate between these claims.<sup>107</sup>

Concerning the first objection that natural law assumes that one agrees on a definition of nature, MacIntyre admits that moral philosophers disagree upon what nature is, but for MacIntyre, one does not need to agree on the identity of nature in order to agree on the content of the natural law. Any systematic questioning concerning what is good presupposes certain requirements. When people search for individual goods or the common good, the type of life that results is one that is in approximate obedience to the demands of the natural law:

But how can I have relationships of adequate cooperative inquiry and learning except with those whom I can trust without qualification? And how can I trust without qualification, unless I recognize myself and others as mutually bound by such precepts as those that enjoin that we *never* do violence of any sort to innocent human life, that we *always* tell each other the truth, and that we *always* uphold justice in all our relationships.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, “Theories of Natural Law in the Culture of Advanced Modernity,” in *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural Law*, ed. Edward B. MacLean (Wilmington, DE: ISI, 2000), 93.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>107</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 65. See also MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 247.

<sup>108</sup>MacIntyre, “Natural Law in Advanced Modernity,” 109-10. Italics in original.

In debating what the word *nature* means, each dialogue partner must exhibit “conversational justice,” which MacIntyre defines as the view that first “each of us speaks with candor, not pretending or deceiving or striking attitudes, and secondly that each takes up no more time than is justified by the importance of the point that she or he has to make and the arguments necessary for making it.”<sup>109</sup> These requirements are part of the precepts that constitute the natural law. In using the word *natural*, one need not precisely agree on the term *nature* any more than the use of the word *spiritual* assumes that two parties are in complete agreement on the concept of *spirit*.

Concerning the second objection, MacIntyre admits that a radical human tendency for evil exists. Even before becoming Aristotelian, MacIntyre criticized Aristotle for the flippancy with which he treated human moral failure.<sup>110</sup> Natural law, moreover, is insufficient to overcome an evil will. The natural law teaches humans how they are to act as rational agents, but MacIntyre follows Aquinas in holding to an Augustinian view of the human will. Aquinas replaces Aristotle’s concept of ἀκρασία with an Augustinian notion of *mala voluntas*.<sup>111</sup>

The natural law is insufficient in three different ways. The fact that everyone fails to live up to the demands of natural law is one reason that the theological virtues are necessary.<sup>112</sup> Like Aristotle, Aquinas structures his ethic eudaimonistically, but unlike

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<sup>109</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 111.

<sup>110</sup>MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 76.

<sup>111</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 181. MacIntyre later claims, “The Augustinian understanding of fallen human nature is used to explain the limitations of Aristotle’s arguments, just as the detail of Aristotle often corrects Augustine’s generalizations.” *Ibid.*, 205. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 20, 1. For Aquinas, moreover, evil can manifest itself in many ways. He claims that “for a thing to be evil, one single defect suffices, whereas, for it to be good simply, it is not enough for it to be good in one point only, it must be good in every respect.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, ed. Peter Kreeft, trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 429. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 20, 2.

<sup>112</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 92. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Ephesios lectura* 2, 3. Aquinas claims that human sin is too radical for humans even to exercise free will in order to have faith.

Aristotle, Aquinas claims that only incomplete happiness is available apart from eternal life.<sup>113</sup> The second reason that the theological virtues are necessary, therefore, is that the natural law is insufficient to lead humans to attain to their ultimate end.<sup>114</sup> The third way that natural law is insufficient is that the theological virtues, particularly *caritas*, provide structure for all of the virtues. For Aquinas, MacIntyre claims, “Charity is the form of all virtue; without charity the virtues would lack the specific kind of directedness which they require.”<sup>115</sup>

**Transcendence and deductivism.** The third objection to natural law is that natural law lacks the transcendence necessary for moral discourse.<sup>116</sup> One must transcend natural desires since natural desires conflict. MacIntyre argues, following Aquinas, that the central aspect of what it means to be human is to be rational. He makes this argument by comparing humans with other animals.<sup>117</sup> Unlike other animals, humans can evaluate whether the reasons for their actions are good or bad. The ability to use language further augments this ability.<sup>118</sup> One must, therefore, evaluate all other natural desires according

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<sup>113</sup>He claims that “man’s perfect Happiness . . . consists in the vision of the Divine Essence. Now the vision of God’s Essence surpasses the nature not only of man, but also of every creature.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, 398. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 5, 5.

<sup>114</sup>Aquinas alleges that “because such happiness surpasses the capacity of human nature, man’s natural principles which enable him to act well according to his capacity, do not suffice to direct man to this same happiness. Hence it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end, by means of his natural principles, albeit not without the Divine assistance.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, 465. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 62, 1.

<sup>115</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 205. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 62, 4.

<sup>116</sup>This topic is one aspect of the larger topic as to whether one can derive an “ought” from an “is.” For the sake of space, I will not be dealing with this larger topic. For a classic collection of articles on this topic, see W. D. Hudson, ed., *The Is-Ought Question: A Collection of Papers on the Central Problem in Moral Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

<sup>117</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 56-59.

<sup>118</sup>MacIntyre also writes, “And when a species, such as our own, is able through the use of language to become reflective about its reasons, it is not only the having of reasons that is now on occasion causally effective in guiding behavior, but the having of reasons for taking this set of considerations rather than that to be in this particular situation genuinely reason-affording that is causally effective.” *Ibid.*, 59. Aquinas argues in a structurally similar manner: “Of actions done by man those alone are properly called *human*, which are proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational animals in this, that he is master of his actions. Wherefore those actions alone are properly called human, of which man is master. Now man

to whether they are rational. Whether or not this argument can withstand all criticism, MacIntyre makes a philosophical argument. Hart's allegation is, therefore, simply not true that natural law depends "on which values one has privileged at a level too elementary for philosophy to adjudicate."<sup>119</sup> When MacIntyre argues from human nature, he does not simply list a collection of natural human desires. He argues from the rational aspect of human nature.

Two additional aspects of MacIntyre's moral philosophy counter the objection that natural law lacks transcendent standards necessary for morality. First, MacIntyre provides a type of transcendence for his version of natural law theory. He claims that what moral obligation needs to transcend is the individual. His view of the common good means that morality is necessary not merely an individual endeavor.<sup>120</sup> Without a robust view of the common good, one's moral philosophy becomes arbitrary.<sup>121</sup> Second, MacIntyre, following Aquinas, claims that the natural law is not completely immanent. Natural law is a participation in God's eternal law.<sup>122</sup> He states, "God makes us aware of the precepts of the natural law as binding upon us by enabling us to grasp them as

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is master of his actions through his reason and will; whence, too, the free-will is defined as *the faculty and will of reason*." See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, 350. Emphasis in original. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 1, 1.

<sup>119</sup>Hart, "Nature Loves to Hide," 71. The emphasis on rationality is what, according to MacIntyre, distinguishes an Aristotelian community from the type of community lauded in later German philosophy: "It is important to observe that, although this type of political society – let us recognize that in it which is Aristotelian by calling it a *polis* – does indeed require a high degree of shared culture by those who participate in it, it is not itself constituted by that shared culture and is very different from those political societies whose essential bonds are the bonds of a shared cultural tradition. A *polis* is at least as different from the political society of a *Volk* as either is from that of a liberal democracy . . . A *polis* is always, potentially or actually, a society of rational enquiry, of self-scrutiny. The bonds of a *Volk* by contrast are prerational and nonrational. The philosophers of the *Volk* are Herder and Heidegger, not Aristotle." MacIntyre, "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, 241.

<sup>120</sup>Chap. 2 of this dissertation deals with his view of the common good.

<sup>121</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 99-118.

<sup>122</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. theol.* I – II, 91, 2.

precepts of reason and so promulgating them.”<sup>123</sup> The natural law, therefore, has a divine origin.

The responses to the three objections above do not exhaust either the objections or the responses one could make for or against MacIntyre’s moral philosophy. Nonetheless, MacIntyre is able to defend his view against a number of objections that would be defeaters if valid. His historicism does not entail relativism, and his Thomism provides substantial resources in arguing against relativism. MacIntyre’s view of natural law entails neither a universally recognized definition of nature, a denial of radical human propensity toward evil, nor an entirely immanent view of morality.

### **Explanatory Scope**

The primary point of this chapter and the previous chapter is not that MacIntyre provides individual arguments that compel every rational individual to accept his moral philosophy. Neither has the point been that these arguments cumulatively demonstrate that MacIntyre’s moral philosophy is worthy for all to accept. The primary point is that these individual areas demonstrate that MacIntyre’s moral philosophy has significant explanatory scope. His moral philosophy provides one with substantive positions on a variety of topics: the continuity of the self, political theory, an understanding of a human life as narrative, the justification of morality, and human vulnerability. As Iris Murdoch claims, “a theory, whether normative or logical, is the more attractive the more it explains, the more its structure may be seen as underlying things which are familiar to us in ordinary life.”<sup>124</sup> The claim of these two chapters is that

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<sup>123</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 89. What Carl Henry states of Thomas Aquinas is not, therefore, accurate: “What he emphasized, rather, is the existence of a ‘natural law’ whose content is universally accessible to human reason independently of divine revelation on the basis of academic philosophy. The crucial issue then becomes how much moral law can be known by natural reason apart from transcendent divine revelation.” Henry, “Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture,” 60. Cf. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart*, 210.

<sup>124</sup> Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter Conradi (New York: Penguin, 1997), 327.

MacIntyre's moral philosophy provides explanations of "things which are familiar to us in ordinary life."

If a moral philosophy is to have explanatory scope, then that philosophy must have an initial plausibility. A number of possible defeaters for MacIntyre's moral philosophy have, therefore, been addressed, and of the objections given, none is fatal to MacIntyre's view. In order to have a clearer view of MacIntyre's explanatory scope, comparing the extent of the explanatory scope with a moral philosopher who deals with similar subjects is helpful. The following chapter deals with such a philosopher.

## CHAPTER 4

### A MODERN SCOTIST

In determining the range of explanatory scope in John Hare's prescriptive realism, one must note two issues that affect the direction of this examination. First, one of the defining philosophical influences in Hare's life is John Duns Scotus.<sup>1</sup> Each of the candidates within Hare's philosophy for explanatory scope reflect his Scotism. Second, MacIntyre and Hare differ significantly in the way they see the task of philosophy. MacIntyre contends that contemporary analytic philosophy is unduly narrow in scope.<sup>2</sup> Philosophy has to do with *Weltanschauung*, and an important task of philosophy is to integrate and synthesize the contentions of various academic disciplines. Conversely, Hare locates himself within the analytic tradition that MacIntyre criticizes. He sees the primary task of philosophy as the analysis of words and concepts that both philosophers and non-philosophers use.

A consequence of this second issue is that the types of questions that Hare seeks to answer tend to remain within the field of philosophy. These answers, nonetheless, do entail substantial claims in areas outside of moral philosophy. This chapter includes examination of three claims. The first claim has implications for

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<sup>1</sup>Scotus's influence is evident in Hare's later works. His name does not appear in the following three earlier works of Hare: John E. Hare, "Aristotle's Theories of Essence" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1975); John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and John E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>For two brief summaries of MacIntyre's conception of philosophy, see Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 258, and Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2009), 15-18. For Hare's view, see John E. Hare, *Why Bother Being Good? The Place of God in the Moral Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 12.

aesthetics, and the second and third claims entail positions concerning philosophical anthropology. If each position displays an initial plausibility, then Hare's moral philosophy would significantly rival the extent of explanatory scope that MacIntyre provides. The claim of this chapter is that these theses have considerable problems.

### **The Magnetic Nature of the Good**

The first issue in Hare's moral philosophy that appears to provide his viewpoint with significant explanatory scope is his view of goodness. This view arises from the basic question that he seeks to answer through his philosophical position. As the section above states, Hare calls his general moral theory "prescriptive realism."<sup>3</sup> He formulates this view in order to set forth a moral philosophy that provides an answer to the issues that moral expressivists and moral realists raise. Most philosophers use these terms in such a way that the terms are mutually exclusive. In other words, moral expressivism entails moral antirealism.<sup>4</sup> Hare, however, defines both moral realism and moral expressivism in such a way that the two basic theses of each do not contradict one another. Each position simply underscores a different aspect of morality. Realists highlight the external origin of moral values, and expressivists emphasize the subjective nature of the same values.<sup>5</sup> He defines moral realism as "the view that moral properties like goodness or cruelty exist independently of our making judgments that things have such properties."<sup>6</sup> As a realist, Hare acknowledges that moral claims are claims to objectivity.

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<sup>3</sup>John E. Hare, "Prescriptive Realism," *Philosophia Reformata* 71 (2006): 14-30.

<sup>4</sup>For the relationship between moral expressivism and moral antirealism, see Kyle Swan, "A Metaethical Option for Theists," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 34 (2006): 4.

<sup>5</sup>John E. Hare, *God's Call: Moral Realism, God's Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 1.

<sup>6</sup>Hare, "Prescriptive Realism," 14. Alasdair MacIntyre observes that moral disagreement "presupposes the existence of *impersonal* criteria – the existence, independently of the preferences or attitudes of the speaker and hearer, of standards of justice or generosity or duty." Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame press, 2007), 9.

Hare defines moral expressivism as “the view that when a person makes a moral judgment, she is expressing emotion or a desire or will.”<sup>7</sup> This view reflects the position that one does not refer to a moral truth in the same way that one states a fact about, for instance, the nocturnal practices of a bat or the life cycles of oak trees. Moral judgments are affective in a way that other truth claims are not. Although Hare rejects emotivism, he claims that moral claims both involve and should involve one’s emotions. When someone states that abortion is murder or alleges that marriage should include relationships between same-sex couples, that individual is doing more than stating a fact; he or she is expressing an attitude.<sup>8</sup> Hare attempts to formulate a viewpoint that encompasses both the objective and subjective elements of both perspectives. He posits a particular view of goodness in bringing these two perspectives together.

### **A Platonic View of the Good**

Hare finds support of his view of goodness in the work of Plato and Aristotle. Hare’s support in Aristotle comes from Aristotle’s formulation of the unmoved mover. The way the unmoved mover or God<sup>9</sup> moves all things is through drawing them. In Aristotelian thought, the fact that God is both real and necessary means that he is the ultimate reality. Because he is necessary, moreover, he is good.<sup>10</sup> For Aristotle, although God neither creates nor intervenes in human affairs, he draws all things through being

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<sup>7</sup>Hare, “Prescriptive Realism,” 14.

<sup>8</sup>Hilary W. Putnam, “Capabilities and Two Ethical Theories,” *Journal of Human Development* 9 (2008): 377.

<sup>9</sup>Aristotle’s unmoved mover differs considerably from a Christian view of God, but since Aristotle uses the word *θεός* to denote the unmoved mover, I am retaining the term *God*. At the risk of misrepresenting Aristotle, I will also retain the use of a masculine pronoun when referring to the unmoved mover since the contemplation of which the unmoved mover partakes is a paradigm for human contemplation. See Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 1072b24-31. Hare, likewise, uses the word *God* to refer to Aristotle’s unmoved mover while noting the difference between Aristotle’s use and a traditional theistic use. See Hare, *God and Morality*, 15.

<sup>10</sup>Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1072b10-13.

loved.<sup>11</sup> In this image, one can see a combination of objective and subjective elements. Ultimate reality moves through drawing or through being loved.

Hare uses the image of a magnet to describe the Good,<sup>12</sup> and this image comes from Plato's writings. In the *Ion*, Socrates describes to Ion how an individual recites or explains the poetry of Homer. Homeric poets and their interpreters do not have knowledge of that of which they sing and speak. Some divine being inspires them. God is like a magnet, and he draws each person whom he affects:

And are you aware that your spectator is the last of the rings which I spoke of as receiving from each other the power transmitted from the Heracleian lodestone? You, the rhapsode and actor, are the middle ring; the poet himself is the first; but it is the god who through the whole series draws the souls of men whithersoever he pleases, making the power of one depend on the other. And, just as from the magnet, there is a mighty chain of choric performers and masters and under-masters suspended by side-connections from the rings that hang down from the Muse.<sup>13</sup>

In the Platonic image, the magnet combines objective and subjective elements. Behind Homer's writing lies an objective force, but the impact of the force is subjective. The force draws and leads those that the poetry affects.<sup>14</sup> Hare uses the image of the magnet often in his writings to describe the Good,<sup>15</sup> but to understand how Hare utilizes this concept and how he connects the Platonic image of the magnet with moral goodness, one needs to understand his appropriation of two other writers.

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<sup>11</sup>According to Aristotle, "κινεῖ δὲ ὡς ἐρῶμενον." Ibid., 1072b4.

<sup>12</sup>Because of Hare's dependence on Plato and Iris Murdoch, I will use the phrase referring to the magnetic center of moral philosophy as *the Good*.

<sup>13</sup>Plato, *Statesman, Ion, Philebus*, trans. Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 427-29. See Plato, *Ion*, 536a. Cf. *ibid.*, 533d-e.

<sup>14</sup>Plato, *Ion*, 533e, 536a.

<sup>15</sup>See Hare, *God's Call*, 52, 67; *idem*, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 24, 24n26; *idem*, *God and Morality*, 15, 251; and *idem*, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 117-18.

## Iris Murdoch

Iris Murdoch's view of the Good influences Hare's view of goodness in a number of ways. First, she extends Plato's image of the Good as a magnet. Second, her concept of the Good unites moral theory, aesthetic theory, and metaphysical theory. Third, she takes moral failure into account. Each of these issues receive treatment in this section.

**The Good as magnet.** Like G. E. Moore, Murdoch propounds a version of moral realism. Like Moore, furthermore, she claims that the Good is ultimately indefinable.<sup>16</sup> Where she differs from Moore is in the fact that she utilizes the image of the magnet, which she takes from the *Ion*, to describe the Good. For her, the Good has a drawing power, and this power reaches to human beings from an external source that humans cannot fully discern. The Good is, therefore, indefinable "because of the infinite difficulty of the task of apprehending a magnetic but inexhaustible reality."<sup>17</sup> When one encounters the Good, one encounters a magnetic force that is ultimately beyond description. Like Aristotle's unmoved mover, the Good of Murdoch's view evokes love;<sup>18</sup> the Good is "the inspiration and love-object of Eros."<sup>19</sup>

Although Hare ultimately takes the image of the Good as a magnet from Plato, the image is through Murdoch. In other words, Hare uses Plato's image as Murdoch interprets the image. For instance, Murdoch unites the image of the magnet with Plato's allegory of the cave, and Hare follows her example.<sup>20</sup> The Good as a magnet allows Hare

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<sup>16</sup>G. E. Moore, "The Indefinability of Good," in *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy: Readings from Classical and Contemporary Sources*, ed. Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 322.

<sup>17</sup>Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter Conradi (New York: Penguin, 1997), 333. For Murdoch's discussion of the *Ion* and the image of the magnet, see *ibid.*, 393.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>19</sup>Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 474.

<sup>20</sup>See Hare, *God's Call*, 14, and Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 382. Hare actually says that he thinks in places that her interpretation of Plato is incorrect, but he agrees with her position against

to claim that both realists and expressivists are correct in their primary contentions. The Good exists independently of human perception, and to recognize the Good is to experience the way the Good draws one.

Hare's definition of moral judgment depends on Murdoch's general view of the Good. When a person accepts the Good in a moral situation, that individual "endorses" the type of emotion that he or she feels toward the draw.<sup>21</sup> This type of moral judgment could occur in the following way. A mechanic is driving home from work. Although he is tired, he has no pressing need to be home at a particular time. He notices an elderly lady stopped on the side of the road with the hood of her car open. The mechanic feels the draw to pull over and offer to help the lady, but he also feels the pull to continue driving so that he can rest at his own home. If he decides that the right or good choice would be to pull his car over and offer to help the elderly lady, Hare would say that the mechanic has endorsed the draw to help the lady. Hare would also say, moreover, that "the magnetic attraction to which [this emotion] responds is itself transmitting attraction from the magnetic center."<sup>22</sup> The pull toward the Good, therefore, is both objective and subjective.

**The Good as just and beautiful.** The second way in which Murdoch influences Hare is that the Good unifies Murdoch's overall philosophy.<sup>23</sup> As in Plato's view, the Good for Murdoch is that which is beyond being. Art, religion, and morality ubiquitously point to the Good, and this ubiquitous evidence is something ultimately that

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Plato's position.

<sup>21</sup>Hare, "Prescriptive Realism," 15. The particular type of emotion is what Hare calls "effusive emotion," but the distinction between effusive emotion and what he calls "conventional emotion" is not relevant to this dissertation. See *ibid.*, 16, for the distinction.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>23</sup>She writes, "The image of the Good as a transcendent magnetic center seems to me the least corruptible and most realistic picture for us to use in our reflections upon the moral life." Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 361.

one knows via intuition. The Good is the reality behind good art, genuine morality, and legitimate religion: “This ‘Good’ is not the old God in disguise, but rather what the old God symbolized.”<sup>24</sup> For Murdoch high art and mundane ethical decisions teach the same objective truth: “What is experienced as most real in our lives is connected with value which points further on. Our consciousness of failure is a source of knowledge.”<sup>25</sup>

Like Murdoch, Hare claims that a magnetic center causes correct endorsements to cohere. His magnetic center “unifies all our fragmentary experiences of value into a whole that transcends us.”<sup>26</sup> For Hare, as for Murdoch, endorsement of the Good is not only part of moral philosophy; the Good is a concept that applies to aesthetic theory as well. After giving a number of examples of aesthetic and moral goodness, Hare makes the following conclusion about his own experience:

The birch-wood statue of the virgin and child, for example, and the firefighters’ act of courage, and the ideal of keeping sex within marriage, and the pleasure in riding a well-engineered mountain bike on a beautiful woodland trail – all these things hold together in a coherent whole, because they are signals from a single source.<sup>27</sup>

Hare’s theory of endorsement thus applies to aesthetics as to moral philosophy. One may encounter the draw of the Good through a piece of artwork, through nature, or through virtue. When an individual approves the draw as from the Good, he or she is endorsing the pull.

**Falling short of the Good.** The third way in which Murdoch influences Hare is through her account of moral failure. Murdoch utilizes Anselm to make an ontological argument not for the existence of God, but for the Good. The idea of moral perfection,

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<sup>24</sup>Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 428. For the Platonic origin of the Good transcending human conceptions of existence, see Plato, *Respublica* 509b.

<sup>25</sup>Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 430.

<sup>26</sup>Hare, “Prescriptive Realism,” 19. More subjectively, he defines a “magnetic center” as what a person “thinks of as holding together the various things toward which she finds herself drawn.” Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 129.

<sup>27</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 129.

according to Murdoch, entails the existence of moral perfection: “The human scene is one of moral failure combined with the remarkable continued return to an idea of goodness as unique and absolute.”<sup>28</sup> Moral failure results from not being conscious of the Good; furthermore, moral progress, in Murdoch’s view, is a type of awakening.<sup>29</sup>

The primary obstacle, for Murdoch, in recognizing the Good is the innate tendency of human beings to be selfish. When humans focus on themselves, they cease to attend to reality. To miss reality is to miss the Good.<sup>30</sup> She utilizes Plato’s allegory of the cave and claims that individuals think they see the sun when they only see a fire.<sup>31</sup> Progress in morality and in aesthetics thus requires “unselfing.”<sup>32</sup> Losing sight of the self enables one to encounter reality: “The humble man, because he sees himself as nothing, can see other things as they are.”<sup>33</sup> Hare, therefore, calls Iris Murdoch’s moral philosophy “humble Platonism.”<sup>34</sup> Hare concurs that the innate selfishness of humanity “means that our access to the good is always precarious and incomplete, and we are always fatally prone to self-deception.”<sup>35</sup> Hare also agrees with Murdoch on the necessity of humility in discerning the Good. Humans can only respond to the Good appropriately “if we are disciplined in virtue and especially in the virtue of humility,” which Hare defines as a “selfless respect for reality.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, (New York: Penguin, 1992), 427.

<sup>29</sup>She notes, “We are constantly in process of recognizing the falseness of our ‘goods’, and the unimportance of what we deem important. Great art teaches a sense of reality, so does ordinary living and loving. We find out in the most minute details of our lives that the good is real.” Ibid., 430.

<sup>30</sup>Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 382.

<sup>31</sup>She warns, “There are false suns, easier to gaze upon and far more comforting than the true one.” Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 369.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 385.

<sup>34</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 11.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

This perspective provides Hare with an important framework with which to critique moral theorists like Aristotle. As the previous chapter of this dissertation states, Aristotle extols certain characteristics as virtues that Christians, like Hare, consider vices: “It is instructive . . . to look at the way Aristotle worked out his teleology. It turns out that for him both power and prestige are components of the human good. He is not wrong, I think, to perceive that we naturally aim at these things; but he is wrong to argue that because we aim at them, they are components of our good.”<sup>37</sup> Hare argues, following Murdoch, that selfishness and self-promotion are false goods that distract one from encountering the Good. Humans desire to be selfish. Power and notoriety are goods that human beings pursue, but they arise because humans desire to be selfish. These ends, therefore, are not ends that humans ought to pursue. To think that fame and power are genuine goods that humans should pursue is to confuse “the fire for the sun.”<sup>38</sup>

### **The Good of Scotism**

Although Hare follows Murdoch in three significant areas, one area is a significant source of disagreement. In this area, Hare follows Scotus against Murdoch. Murdoch denies any teleological element in her moral philosophy. She claims the world is atelic and human life, therefore, has no final end.<sup>39</sup> The Good is naked, alone, and good for nothing.<sup>40</sup> Virtue is both good and “pointless.”<sup>41</sup>

Hare rejects Murdoch’s atelic worldview, and he incorporates teleology into his moral philosophy. He finds two significant problems with Murdoch’s view. First, he claims that in accepting a concept of the Good while rejecting teleology, Murdoch is

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<sup>37</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 55.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>39</sup>Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 358.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 371, 385.

fundamentally inconsistent.<sup>42</sup> If the Good is the central concept in moral philosophy that unifies disparate aspects of human existence, then the Good is the *τέλος* of humanity. The second issue is that Plato's moral philosophy, to which Murdoch claims to adhere, also entails that the Good has a causal relationship with human morality.<sup>43</sup>

Instead of incorporating additional Platonic concepts into his moral philosophy, Hare relies on John Duns Scotus to provide him with a teleological perspective. For Scotus, the persons of the Trinity love one another eternally. Humans accomplish their *finis* when they enter into a loving relationship with God. Hare notes, "In Scotus, the final end for human beings is that we become co-lovers with God (*condiligentes*)."<sup>44</sup> When one wills what God wills, one experiences this relationship. The concept of God then unites all moral concepts, and from his "goodness stems the moral goodness of any act that is a means to that end."<sup>45</sup>

Hare combines Scotus's view of God with Murdoch's view of the Good. Like Murdoch, Hare holds that one reality unites all moral concepts and language. His concept of goodness unites his moral theory with his aesthetic theory. This reality, moreover, draws humans toward itself. Goodness is magnetic, and one can sense the magnetism emanating from this reality in a number of ways. Contra Murdoch, however, this reality is the final cause of humanity, and this final cause is a personal being. The Good is "what draws us and deserves to draw us, which is finally God and union with God."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 13-14.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 13. For Murdoch's view of the relationship between the Form of the Good and God in Plato, see Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 439. For a view in which the Form of the Good does have a causal relationship with the rest of reality, see Richard Kraut, *How to Read Plato* (London: Granta, 2008), 65-66.

<sup>44</sup>Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 24. For the same point, see idem, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 112, and idem, *God's Call*, 52. For more about how teleology functions in Scotus's view, see idem, *God and Morality*, 107-8.

<sup>45</sup>John Duns Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, ed. and trans. Allan B. Wolter (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 441-43.

<sup>46</sup>John E. Hare, "Goodness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, ed. Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 78. In

## Analysis of Hare's View of Goodness

Hare provides a view of goodness that appears to have significant explanatory scope. The primary question to which he provides an answer is the debate between moral realism and moral expressivism. Hare appears to incorporate the primary contentions of both moral expressivism and moral realism. He views the Good as real, and, through forces of attraction, the Good necessarily affects human emotion. Thus, Hare's view means both that "moral values are 'real' properties" and that "moral judgments are expressions of our feelings."<sup>47</sup>

Hare's view, like Murdoch's view, unifies moral theory with aesthetic theory. If explanatory scope in a philosophical view is that a theory can "explain a wider range of data than will rival hypotheses,"<sup>48</sup> then having a view that provides one central concept for moral philosophy and aesthetic theory is an example of explanatory scope. Hare also, following Murdoch, posits selfishness as the primary factor inhibiting moral progress. He has a theory for moral failure.

An important aspect of Hare's view to note is that theism is not necessarily part of prescriptive realism.<sup>49</sup> Prescriptive realism is Hare's broader metaethical view, and Scotism is his particular type of prescriptive realism.<sup>50</sup> Through Plato, Murdoch, and (to a lesser extent) Aristotle, Hare claims that the Good has a magnetic character, and this belief is the central part of prescriptive realism.<sup>51</sup> The Good is real, but the recognition of

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a number of his works, Hare follows his treatment of Scotus with the image of a magnet. See idem, *God's Call*, 52-53, 67; idem, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 24-25; and idem, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 113, 124.

<sup>47</sup>Thomas Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy: Philosophy in English since 1945*, A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 244, 251.

<sup>48</sup>William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 62.

<sup>49</sup>Hare states, "I am going to try to show in the second part of the article a way to see the value properties as constituted by relationships of various kinds to God, but prescriptive realism does not require this." Hare, "Prescriptive Realism," 20.

<sup>50</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 49.

<sup>51</sup>Hare's view of endorsing the Good is more detailed and systematic than Murdoch's view.

the Good requires one to respond emotively. Scotus identifies the Good as God, and Scotus provides purpose where none exists for Murdoch. In other words, Plato and Murdoch provide the question, and Scotus supplies the answer.

The problem with Hare's view of goodness is that without the theism that Scotus provides, the concept of goodness appears to be an arbitrary or unnecessary concept.<sup>52</sup> For Murdoch, as for Moore, the Good is indefinable,<sup>53</sup> and Hare simply defines the Good as God. If, however, Murdoch's formulation is inherently problematic, then Hare's use of this concept is also problematic. Murdoch's concept is tenuous for three reasons, and by implication, Hare's use of this concept is also tenuous.

**Ignoring Plato's definition of the Good.** The first reason is that Murdoch and Hare ignore the way in which Plato did define the Good. One of the most important passages regarding Plato's view of the Good is his parable of the cave in the seventh book of the *Republic*, and both Murdoch and Hare heavily rely on this passage to formulate their own views.<sup>54</sup> Richard Kraut notes that the parable "tells us something about how important goodness is, but it is not a theory about what goodness is. The *Republic* therefore lacks the very thing that Socrates says is most important to have: an account of goodness."<sup>55</sup> Kraut points out that the *Philebus* is the only place where Plato

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The following is the most concise summary of prescriptive realism: "there is a source of attraction and repulsion outside us to which we respond by valuing something as good or bad. But when we make a moral judgment, we do more than simply report such an attraction; we endorse it or refuse to endorse it. . . . I named this view 'prescriptive realism'." Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 114.

<sup>52</sup>This criticism is similar to MacIntyre's criticism of Moore that chap. 1 of this dissertation summarizes. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 249-57.

<sup>53</sup>The reason I treat Murdoch's view as well as Hare's view, is because Murdoch creates the problem that Hare attempts to solve. An incoherent question needs a reformulation rather than an answer.

<sup>54</sup>See Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 380; Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 399; and Hare, *God's Call*, 14 and 55.

<sup>55</sup>Kraut, *How to Read Plato*, 64.

actually gives a definition of goodness.<sup>56</sup> In this dialogue, Socrates concludes that a proper combination of “beauty, proportion, and truth”<sup>57</sup> constitute the Good. Plato, therefore, defines the Good, yet both Murdoch and Hare ignore this definition. If the Good is the appropriate combination of beauty, symmetry, and veracity, then the Good is neither indefinable as in Murdoch’s view, nor is the Good God as in Hare’s view.<sup>58</sup> The problem is not merely that Murdoch and Hare misrepresent Plato; they posit a metaphysically substantial entity in addition to the Platonic Good. Their theory is, therefore, less simple than Plato’s.

**Absolute goodness.** The second problem for Murdoch and for Hare is that the concept of goodness does not entail intrinsic goodness. Richard Kraut notes that one can speak of human goodness in two different ways.<sup>59</sup> First, some entity may be good for someone. This type of goodness is instrumental. A regular intake of broccoli, for example, is good or beneficial for the sake of one’s health. The second type of goodness is good regardless of whether an entity benefits anyone. Kraut claims that “to say of something that it is *intrinsically* good is to say that it owes its goodness not to its relationship to anything else, but solely to its own nature.”<sup>60</sup> For those who believe that

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<sup>56</sup>Kraut, *How to Read Plato*, 64.

<sup>57</sup>Plato, *Statesman, Ion, Philebus*, trans. Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 391. Kraut notes that “Socrates and Protarchus agree that whatever is complex will be made good when its diverse components are brought together in a harmonious and balanced way, and so what constitutes the good for any such object is precisely that state of proper order. Good consists in balanced unification of the diverse parts of a thing.” Kraut, *How to Read Plato*, 64-65.

<sup>58</sup>Kraut connects the debates of ancient philosophy over goodness with contemporary debates over the nature of goodness. After a discussion of Plato’s view of goodness, Kraut claims that G. E. Moore’s opponents “argue that to talk about what is good – just plain good – is nonsense. We can sensibly talk about what is good *for* someone, as well as about good poems, good food, or good card games.” Kraut notes that Plato would respond that balance is necessary in each entity. Kraut, *How to Read Plato*, 67.

<sup>59</sup>Richard Kraut, “What Is Intrinsic Goodness?,” *Classical Philology* 105 (2010): 450-70. Kraut applies his criticism to any view that utilizes “what is good in itself, or good for its own sake, or good as such, or good in its own right, or good without qualification, or good absolutely, or good *tout court*, or good *sans phrase*.” *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 451.

absolute goodness is real, they also believe that absolute goodness has greater value than instrumental goodness.

Kraut argues that the concept of absolute goodness is unnecessary. One can explain every example of absolute or intrinsic goodness in terms of the relationship as to whether one entity is good for another entity. Hare's prescriptive realism requires a magnetic center, but if he cannot point to an example of an entity, action, or thought that is intrinsically good, then one does not need to suppose that an explanandum exists.

Kraut gives two examples of things that appear to be intrinsically good: human life and moral virtue. He then defends the value of each entity on the grounds other than absolute goodness. In his defense of the goodness of human life, he notes that certain things are better for humans than other things. The value of tasting carrots is not as good for humans as the ability to utilize the sense of sight. Obviously, seeing is better for humans than tasting carrots.<sup>61</sup> He then notes that one can compare benefits between species:

Some animals that experience pain are not subject to the emotional suffering that often accompanies severe and debilitating *human* pain. The pain of these brutes is not as bad for them as pain is for us when it is surrounded by anguish and humiliation. Furthermore, even when animals feel emotions, as some do, we have no reason to suppose that these feelings have the depth and resonance of human emotion.<sup>62</sup>

He then argues that life has that type of goodness. For a human to live has more goodness for that human than for a non-human animal to live. Human life is thus valuable not because each human life, according to Kraut, participates in absolute goodness, but because living is good for each person.

Kraut makes the same argument regarding virtue. One can explicate the value of each virtue in terms of whether that virtue is good for someone. Being honest is good

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<sup>61</sup>Kraut, "What Is Intrinsic Goodness?," 457.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid. Emphasis in original.

for human beings without positing a metaphysical entity of absolute goodness. The view is dubious “that one should cultivate or nourish a personal quality about which it can be truly said: having that quality does no good for anyone – neither for the person who has it, nor for any others.”<sup>63</sup> Virtues are good for individuals. Without intrinsic goodness, Murdoch lacks “a definite direction”<sup>64</sup> toward which human realities point; Hare lacks the “magnetic center”<sup>65</sup> that the existence of God explains. Without this magnetic center, no need exists to argue for a Scotist version of prescriptive realism.

**The Good and intuition.** The third problem with Hare’s view is that his concept of the Good rests on intuition. Both Hare’s view and Murdoch’s view have more nuances than Moore’s intuitionism.<sup>66</sup> For Murdoch, the process of intuiting the Good requires the practice of “unselfing.”<sup>67</sup> For Hare, one must determine whether particular actions are universalizable and whether they promote good for others.<sup>68</sup> As the above section states, Murdoch and Hare both acknowledge the selfish tendencies of human beings. They, nonetheless, rest knowledge of the Good on intuition.

The problem with resting the knowledge of something on intuition is not that intuition is always faulty; the problem is that intuition provides skeptics of one position

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<sup>63</sup>Richard Kraut, *What Is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 191-92.

<sup>64</sup>Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 381.

<sup>65</sup>Hare, “Prescriptive Realism,” 19.

<sup>66</sup>Hare writes that Murdoch “thinks very differently from G. E. Moore about how the good is to be apprehended. We can imagine Moore’s group seated together with furrowed brows, concentrating on the required thought experiments about what things would still be good in absolute isolation. For Murdoch, in contrast, the process of apprehension is one of lifelong obedience, mortification, and self-discipline.” Hare, *God’s Call*, 15.

<sup>67</sup>Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, 369.

<sup>68</sup>One intuits the Good, but “moral screening” is necessary to discern whether the intuition of the Good is genuine. Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 129. Hare summarizes the screening process in the following way: “My claim is that the norms for character and life we now identify as moral are organized around the directive that tells us to take the largest available perspective on the world, and from that perspective to care about the well-being of everybody, and to respect the unique and equal value of each person.” *Ibid.*, 18.

no grounds upon which to agree. Hare does not provide someone like Richard Kraut with a reason for accepting the existence of the Good. For skeptics of the Good, each apprehension of goodness is equally explainable in terms of being good for someone. Many ways of explaining what is morally good are open. One may also argue along the lines of Plato's definition of goodness. When someone is good, that individual is acting according to the standards of truth, beauty, and proportion. An Aristotelian would argue that moral goodness may simply define what it means for a human being to live in accordance to one's end. The purpose of aesthetic goodness may be to allow person's soul to rest.<sup>69</sup> All of the above ways of explanation do not require the existence of the Good. The skeptics of the absolute good, moreover, may utilize Ockham's razor and claim that positing the Good is beyond necessity. Hare's view of the Good is not necessarily false, but the Good does not provide his theory with explanatory scope.

### **The Affection for Justice**

One of the chief ways in which Scotus's moral thought directly shapes Hare's moral philosophy is in the Scotist doctrine of the two affections. This viewpoint appears to provide Hare with explanatory scope regarding free will and the selfless nature of morality. Anselm of Canterbury was the first proponent of this view. In order to see the ways in which this doctrine may aid Hare's moral philosophy in providing explanatory scope, seeing how this view functions in the philosophy of Anselm is necessary.

### **Anselm's Two Affections**

Anselm attempts to address a major aspect of the problem of evil in his work *De casu diaboli*. The primary issue in this work is how the devil could have sinned if God only gives good gifts. Part of Anselm's answer to this question is that God gave the devil

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<sup>69</sup>I am indebted to Richard H. Stark, III, for making me aware of this possibility.

two different wills: the will for happiness and the will for justice.<sup>70</sup> Both wills are good gifts of God, but with those gifts lies the possibility of evil. If the possessor of the two wills ranks the will for happiness above the will for justice, then evil results. The good angels maintained the appropriate priority and willed justice above their own happiness, but Satan prioritized the will for happiness and then lost the capacity to will justice at all.

Anselm alleges that to believe in the goodness of God and the existence of evil, one must believe that angels had two wills. If a living being only has one will, then choice is not possible. If, moreover, choice is not possible, then morality is not possible:

Therefore, since he cannot be called just or unjust for willing only happiness or for willing only what is fitting when he wills in that way out of necessity, and since he neither can nor ought to be happy unless he wills to be happy and wills it justly, God must create both wills in him in such a way that he both wills to be happy and wills it justly.<sup>71</sup>

A key part of Anselm's argument is also that evil or injustice is not an entity. Like darkness, evil is a void where God has designed good to be.<sup>72</sup> Defining moral goodness in this way allows Anselm to deny the claim that God created evil. Evil is nothing for God to create. In willing happiness over justice, a lack of goodness results.

### **The Two Affections of Scotus**

The work of Anselm was a considerable influence on Scotus.<sup>73</sup> Scotus, following Anselm, believed that humans have two affections of the will: the *affectio justitiae* and the *affectio commodi*.<sup>74</sup> For Scotus, the affection for justice is the intellectual

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<sup>70</sup>Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil in Three Philosophical Dialogues: On Truth, On Freedom of Choice, On the Fall of the Devil*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), 63.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 82. Even his pre-Scotist work, Hare claims that moral obligation implies ability. See Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 61.

<sup>72</sup>Injustice is not simply the absence of justice. The last part of the following definition is important: "injustice is nothing other than the absence of justice where there ought to be justice." Otherwise, one could say that the cockroaches, trees, and fingernails are unjust. They are not unjust because they do not have the capacity of being just. Ibid., 85.

<sup>73</sup>Anselm was "one of Scotus's main sources in the next century." Hare, *God and Morality*, 84.

<sup>74</sup>Although Anselm uses the terms *voluntas justitiae* and *voluntas beatitudinis*, Scotus specifically refers to *De casu diaboli* for support for his views of *affectio justitiae* and *affectio commodi*.

propensity “to will some good not oriented to self.”<sup>75</sup> The affection for happiness is the intellectual propensity for anything “with reference to itself.”<sup>76</sup> Scotus makes the same point that Anselm makes. Without the affection for justice, one would lack the capacity to choose. Scotus, moreover, also connects the two affections with the origin of evil. He claims that “the initial inordinate desire did not proceed from an affection for justice, as no sin proceeds from such. Hence, it must have come from an affection for the advantageous, because every act elicited by the will stems from an affection either for justice or for the advantageous, according to Anselm.”<sup>77</sup>

Scotus makes a further point. He notes that because the affection for happiness always refers to itself in some sense, the affection for justice is “nobler.”<sup>78</sup> As long as morality contains self-interest, something vital is lacking. Wolter notes that Scotus separates himself from Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and other eudaimonists in his view of the affection for justice. A eudaimonist only recognizes an affection for happiness.<sup>79</sup> By providing another mechanism for the will, Scotus recognizes a more robust view of the freedom of the will than his eudaimonist protagonists.<sup>80</sup>

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See Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 178. I will refer to these concepts as the “affection for justice” and the “affection for happiness.” Although *commodum* typically signifies the idea of convenience or advantage, I will use the word *happiness* to emphasize the fact that Hare and Scotus posit their views against eudaimonism. When Lucifer fell, he placed the *affectio commodi* above the *affectio iustitiae*. Scotus restates this position to be that Lucifer desired *beatitudo perfecta*. See Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 465. Hare also sometimes uses the word *happiness* to refer to the *affectio commodi*. For an example, see Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 203.

<sup>75</sup>Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 179.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 465.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Allan Wolter writes that the affection for advantage is “described by Aristotle and Plato before [Anselm] as ‘natural’ in the sense that it inclines one to seek whatever perfects the nature of the agent, either as concretized in this individual or as conserving the species to which it belongs.” Allan Wolter, an introduction to *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 39.

<sup>80</sup>Thomas Williams argues that the separation of happiness from morality is highly uncommon in medieval philosophy and theology. At this point, Scotus is, according to Williams, “un-medieval.” See Thomas Williams, “How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 444.

## Hare and the Affection for Justice

Hare accepts Scotus's view on the two affections.<sup>81</sup> Every act that a person commits arises from one of the two affections. Hare defines the affection for happiness as "an inclination towards our own happiness and perfection."<sup>82</sup> The affection for justice is the inclination "towards what is good in itself, regardless of its relation to us."<sup>83</sup> For Scotus, the affection for justice is more than an inclination for giving to each his or her due. Justice is the uprightness or rectitude of will for its own sake.<sup>84</sup> Hare juxtaposes this type of justice against an Aristotelian justice, which, Hare claims, necessarily has an aspect of advantage.<sup>85</sup>

As in the views of Scotus and Anselm, the desire for happiness is not morally blameworthy for Hare.<sup>86</sup> Happiness is important, and the tenability of moral philosophy rests on the view that happiness and morality ultimately unite.<sup>87</sup> Hare claims, however, that happiness and goodness are conceptually separate, and genuine moral life requires that goodness take priority over happiness. In other words, prudential reasoning is not moral reasoning. If happiness, pleasure, or any other type of self-interested category "remains the basic structure of our motivation, I think there is something wrong with

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<sup>81</sup>For Hare's treatment of the two affections, see Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 15-18; Hare, *God's Call*, 55-59; idem, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 77-79, 203; and idem, *God and Morality*, 91-97.

<sup>82</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 91.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 241. Scotus follows Anselm's definition almost verbatim. See Anselm, *Three Philosophical Dialogues*, 26.

<sup>85</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 91.

<sup>86</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 77.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 78-79; Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 31; and John E. Hare, "Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?," in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, ed. Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 86-88.

it.”<sup>88</sup> Eudaimonism is, according to Hare, “unacceptably self-regarding,”<sup>89</sup> and the affection for justice allows one to eradicate the self-regarding nature of eudaimonism.

**An initial objection.** Before analyzing the explanatory scope of the two affections, one must deal with an initial objection. In positing the two affections, Hare appears to be dealing with issues that assume the truth of Christianity. For instance, some of the reasons that Hare gives for holding to the Scotist doctrine of the two affections is because Hare believes that his position is scriptural.<sup>90</sup> In discussing the importance of the affection for justice, Hare claims that in Rom 9:3, “Paul is performing just the kind of counterfactual thought experiment that is required here. If his eternal destruction were necessary, which it isn’t, for the well-being of his people, he would prefer his destruction.”<sup>91</sup> Following the example of Anselm and Scotus, Hare also claims that the belief in two affections solves theological issues concerning the origin of evil and the fall of the devil.<sup>92</sup> Hare’s critics can allege that his prescriptive realism is a theological ethic that assumes the truth of Christianity.

One may respond in a number of ways. First, Hare follows Kant’s example of translating theological doctrines into philosophical tenets.<sup>93</sup> In other words, he posits doctrines that come from Christianity and then removes the aspects of them specific to Christianity in order to see if they add cogency to his philosophical position. This

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<sup>88</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 78. Hare has shifted his position significantly on this issue. In his earlier work, he bases morality on prudential reasoning. See Hare and Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 15-16.

<sup>89</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 79.

<sup>90</sup>Hare gives three passages of Scripture for support: Exod 32:32, Rom 9:3, and Matt 27:45.

<sup>91</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 81. See also Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 77, and Hare, *God and Morality*, 92.

<sup>92</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 92.

<sup>93</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 39-41.

modified belief does not then logically rest on the truth of Christianity.<sup>94</sup> One can abstract the two affections from the theological tenets of Scotus's view. Second, nothing concerning what Hare writes about the two affections explicitly requires the truth of Christianity. In addition to the theological bases for the two affections, he also provides empirical grounds that one of the capacities that humans have and that non-human animals lack is the affection for justice.<sup>95</sup> Third, Scotus himself did not think that one needs salvific grace in order to prioritize the affection for justice.<sup>96</sup>

**Possible ways of explanatory scope.** If Hare's account of the two motivations of the will is accurate, this view supplies explanatory scope in two significant ways. First, this account apparently coincides with recent defenses of free will. A number of scientists and philosophers claim that recent findings in neuroscience disprove the notion of free will.<sup>97</sup> Strong rebuttals of these findings, however, support belief in free will.<sup>98</sup> A Scotist view of the two affections appears to coincide with these recent defenses. Second, the affection of justice also provides explanatory scope regarding the disinterested nature of morality.

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<sup>94</sup>See John E. Hare, "Ethics and Religion: Two Kantian Arguments," *Philosophical Investigations* 34 (2011): 151-52. Hare believes that one is able to translate fewer Christian doctrines than Kant does.

<sup>95</sup>John E. Hare, "Evolutionary Theory and Theological Ethics," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 25 (2012): 252-53.

<sup>96</sup>Allan Wolter summarizes Scotus's view and the way that Scotus differs from Anselm at this point: "For Scotus, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, believed that man by reason of his natural powers could love God above self or any other created good, and that this capacity was not something he possessed only in virtue of some special grace or the infused theological virtue of charity. In this he seems to have gone further, perhaps, than Anselm himself." Wolter, an introduction to *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 40.

<sup>97</sup>For an early work making this argument, see Benjamin Libet, "Unconscious Cerebral Initiative and Voluntary Action," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 8 (1985): 529-66. For a more recent treatment, see Benjamin Libet, *Mind Time: The Temporal Factor in Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>98</sup>See especially Alfred R. Mele, ed., *Surrounding Free Will: Philosophy, Psychology, Neuroscience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). This work is the culmination of the Big Questions in Free Will project. See also Alfred R. Mele, *Free: Why Science Hasn't Disproved Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

The primary epistemic virtue that Scotus gives in terms of his beliefs of the two affections of the will is that the affection for justice provides the moral agent with freedom of the will. Scotus makes the point, following Anselm, that if humans only had a desire for happiness, they would have no free will. They would necessarily will whatever action appears to produce the most happiness.<sup>99</sup> With two affections, humans have the freedom to choose between what is just and what appears to bring the most happiness. They have “a self-determining power to choose in opposite directions.”<sup>100</sup>

This view of the will is a libertarian view of free will.<sup>101</sup> Hare unequivocally supports the Scotist connection between free will and the two affections. The belief in two affections supports the view that humans have the power of contrary choice, and this power provides moral agents with accountability. If a moral agent could have acted in another way, then that moral agent is accountable for morally wrong choices.<sup>102</sup> Without two affections, freedom is not possible: “the affection for justice is nonetheless a necessary condition for the exercise of freedom.”<sup>103</sup>

### **Problems with the Two Affections and Free Will**

A number of problems exist for the claim that Hare’s view of the two affections provides his moral philosophy with explanatory scope. First, current defenders of free will do not necessarily defend a libertarian view of free will. The central issue in these recent defenses is whether conscious decisions provide a cause for action. Alfred Mele simply argues, for example, against the thesis that recent scientific research

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<sup>99</sup>Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 187.

<sup>100</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 57.

<sup>101</sup>For a defense of this point, see Thomas Williams, “The Libertarian Foundations of Scotus’s Moral Philosophy,” *The Thomist* 62 (1998): 193-215.

<sup>102</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 93.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

demonstrates that conscious decisions do not causally affect human action.<sup>104</sup>

Compatibilism is consistent with these claims. The power of contrary choice is not even necessarily a requirement for moral responsibility.<sup>105</sup>

The second problem is that this view stands or falls with a libertarian view of free will. For those who do not already accept a libertarian view of free will, Hare's Scotism will not explain anything. What exacerbates the problem, moreover, is that Hare claims that Scotism should appeal to Calvinists. Both Scotus and Calvin place less trust in human reason than Thomists. The basis for accepting Scotus's view of the two affections, however, is that this view coincides with a view that Calvinists tend to reject.<sup>106</sup> In providing free will as a basis for accepting the two affections, Hare thus provides a defeater for the same type of individuals to which he appeals.

The third problem is the belief in two affections does nothing to ameliorate the problem of indeterminism within a libertarian view of free will. When one examines, for instance, why a person chooses to act in one way rather than another, the determining factor is without reason. Critics of libertarian views claim that choice becomes inexplicable. Even Jerry Walls, a strident defender of libertarian free will and a major critic of Christian compatibilism, admits to feeling "the force of objections by critics who think the whole notion is mysterious, and at times even seems incoherent."<sup>107</sup> The

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<sup>104</sup>Mele points out that in the scientific experiments that skeptics of free will utilize, the types of decisions are meaningless decisions like whether to push a button on the left or right. One cannot conclude from these types of decisions that consciousness does not causally affect human action. In the way that Mele defines free will, the types of decisions that defenders of free will treat are decisions that require morally relevant factors and analysis of reasons. See Alfred R. Mele, "Free Will and Neuroscience," *Philosophic Exchange* 43 (2013): 1-17.

<sup>105</sup>Steven B. Cowan, "God, Libertarian Agency, and Scientific Explanations: Problems for J. P. Moreland's Strategy for Avoiding the God of the Gaps," *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2002): 128.

<sup>106</sup>For two examples of Calvinistic compatibilism, see Paul Helm, "God, Compatibilism, and the Authorship of Sin," *Religious Studies* 46 (2010): 115-24, and John S. Feinberg, "And the Atheist Shall Lie Down with the Calvinist: Atheism, Calvinism, and the Free Will Defense," *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 142-52. As the title of the second article indicates, Feinberg argues that Calvinists and atheists both reject libertarianism.

<sup>107</sup>Jerry L. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 77. As the title indicates, Walls defends libertarian freedom on theological grounds.

problem for Hare is that a Scotist view of two affections does not eradicate or even mollify this problem. MacIntyre notes that the question concerning a reason that a moral agent acts is always a relevant question. He then points out a problem with the Scotist response to this question:

But on any plain reading of Scotus's view, it seems that this question ["What is the deciding reason the moral agent acted in this manner?"] cannot arise. That the agent acted as she or he did, for whatever reason she or he may have had, is a matter of an act of will that has and can have no further explanation, a contention at odds not only with Aquinas's Aristotelianism, but also with our everyday modes of explanation and understanding.<sup>108</sup>

In summary, the doctrine of the two affections does not provide explanatory scope by providing a mechanism for free will.

### **Morality and Selflessness**

The second area of possible explanatory scope is that the two affections reflect the disinterested nature of genuine morality. Hare contrasts Scotism with eudaimonism, which he defines as "the view that reason tells us to do whatever we do for the sake of our eudaimonia, traditionally but inadequately translated as 'happiness'."<sup>109</sup> He notes that although a Christian version of eudaimonism exists,<sup>110</sup> eudaimonism asserts that the self is the ultimate motivation for action. In contrast to this self-regarding type of morality, Scotus, according to Hare, provides one with a proper view of love. Hare responds to three objections to his view that eudaimonists would raise. Eudaimonists may claim that Hare mistakes happiness with selfishness.<sup>111</sup> Hare responds that the view that happiness

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<sup>108</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 99.

<sup>109</sup>John E. Hare, "A Kantian Response to Jean Porter," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26 (2013): 175.

<sup>110</sup>For example, Augustine claims that "insofar as all human beings seek a happy life, they are not in error; but to the extent that someone strays from the path that leads to happiness – all the while insisting that his only goal is to be happy – to that extent he is in error, for 'error' simply means following something that doesn't take us where we want to go." Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 47-49. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, 1, 7.

<sup>111</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 81.

is central “is still self-regarding.”<sup>112</sup> One cannot, in Hare’s view, genuinely love someone if the concern for happiness is central. He counters, “To make happiness central is to insist on the primacy of the relation of others to the self over what those others are in themselves, independently of the self, and this is unacceptably self-regarding.”<sup>113</sup>

The second objection is that the Scotist confuses concern and purpose. Happiness may be the primary purpose of a moral agent while not being the immediate concern of the agent. In other words, a eudaimonist may think that if he or she keeps his or her own good as an immediate concern in a friendship, then the eudaimonist will not be the type of friend who achieves his or her own good.<sup>114</sup> With this mindset, the purpose of the eudaimonist’s choice remains happiness, but the immediate concern is regard for another. Hare believes, however, that this view involves an attempt in self-deception. One is trying not to think of the self when in reality the basis of one’s motivation remains the self. Hare claims that when one’s purpose is happiness, to have one’s concern chiefly for the good of another person is not possible.<sup>115</sup>

Hare is not alone in considering eudaimonism as egoistic. Nicholas Wolterstorff alleges that the good Samaritan of Luke 10:30-37 could not have been a eudaimonist: “the Samaritan’s going to the aid of the wounded man alongside the road did not enhance, nor did it promise to enhance, his own wellbeing.”<sup>116</sup> Wolterstorff, like

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<sup>112</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 81-82.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 82.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>116</sup>Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 10. He concludes, “The position of the eudaimonist is that the good Samaritan was misguided. Rather than holding him up for praise, we should declare that acting as he did makes no sense; such indiscriminate bleeding-heart behavior is not to be admired.” Ibid. Wolterstorff’s criticism of eudaimonism is subject to the same criticisms to which Hare’s criticisms are subject. These criticisms are given below. For a defense of sacrificial kindness toward strangers from a eudaimonistic perspective, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Carus, 1999), 123-25.

Hare, alleges that eudaimonism ultimately undermines ethics in changing the locus from others to the self.

### **Criticisms of Hare's Criticism of Eudaimonism**

The problem with Hare's rejection of eudaimonism is that Hare misrepresents a large number of eudaimonists. Three examples of eudaimonists who withstand Hare's criticisms are Julia Annas, Richard Kraut, and Alasdair MacIntyre. Annas gives two responses to the charge of egoism within eudaimonism. First, she notes that the major issue in determining whether eudaimonism is egoistic is how one defines happiness or eudaimonia. Without first defining what eudaimonia is, one cannot determine whether eudaimonism is egoistic. She notes that in ancient theories, "eudaimonism as such makes no uniform demand or permission where the interests of others are at stake; thus it is radically mistaken to charge eudaimonistic theories with egoism."<sup>117</sup> Hare does not define the type of happiness that is self-regarding. For him, Aristotelian εὐδαιμονία, Thomistic *beatitudo*, and Scotist *commodum* are all various words for the same type of entity.

The second problem with calling eudaimonism egoistic, according to Annas, is that the eudaimonists who are virtue ethicists identify virtuous living with eudaimonia. In other words, being a virtuous person is what human flourishing means. Virtues like courage and compassion, moreover, require that the virtuous individual concern himself or herself with others as an end: "If I aim at living a good life, I am aiming at being just and generous, and thus 'focusing' on others rather than myself."<sup>118</sup> Within these types of eudaimonism, one does not experience happiness as an entity that is separate from virtue. Virtuous living is eudaimonia.

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<sup>117</sup>Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 322.

<sup>118</sup>Julia Annas, "Virtue Ethics and the Charge of Egoism," in *Morality and Self-Interest*, ed. Paul Bloomfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 209.

Like Annas, Kraut identifies eudaimonia with activity. One determines whether an activity is part of eudaimonia by examining what being human means. Living beings flourish “by growing, maturing, making full use of the potentialities, capacities, and faculties that (under favorable conditions) they naturally have at an early stage of their existence.”<sup>119</sup> He then claims that human eudaimonia or flourishing means that a person “possesses, develops, and enjoys the exercise of cognitive, affective, sensory, and social powers (no less than physical powers).”<sup>120</sup> Kraut then argues that the experience of seeking the wellbeing of another person is part of wellbeing. As in Annas’s view, Kraut’s view is that loving and caring for others is part of wellbeing. Love and care do not lead to eudaimonia; they are essential components of eudaimonia.

As noted in chapter 2 of this dissertation, MacIntyre unites the good of the individual with the common good. A person who is seeking his or her own good is not simply thinking about his or her own good; he or she is thinking about the common good. One cannot achieve what is good for the self without pursuing what is good for the community in which one resides.<sup>121</sup> Sometimes, moreover, this commitment to the common good must be unconditional. Because of the essentially dependent nature of humans, for anyone to achieve his or her good requires mutuality: “each of us achieves our good only if and insofar as others make our good their good by helping us through periods of disability to become ourselves the kind of human being – through acquisition and exercise of the virtues – who makes the good of others her or his good.”<sup>122</sup> One does not, in this view, pursue the good of others in order to achieve one’s own good. Pursuing the individual good and the common good are aspects of a single project.

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<sup>119</sup>Kraut, *What Is Good and Why*, 131.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>121</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 140.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, 108.

In different ways, Annas, Kraut, and MacIntyre demonstrate that one does not need to abandon eudaimonism in order to avoid egoism. The acceptance, therefore, of a Scotist theory of two affections does not account for the other-regarding nature of morality in a way that eudaimonism does not. Hare needs to provide a stronger argument against eudaimonism if he is to make a reasonable claim that prescriptive realism explains the moral aspect of human existence in a way that other views do not. He is not necessarily wrong in his Scotist view of the two affections; he merely does not provide doubters with an initial plausibility from explanatory scope.

### **Human Nature and Supervenience**

The third possible area of explanatory scope regarding Hare's prescriptive realism is his view of moral supervenience. As in the previous two areas, Hare adopts a Scotist view of supervenience. Hare claims that the primary benefit of a Scotist view of supervenience is in having a view in which morality coincides with nature without being necessarily derived from nature. In order to understand Hare's view of supervenience, one needs first to understand the relationship to Scotist supervenience and supervenience in contemporary analytic philosophy, and the first part of this section, therefore, compares each type of supervenience. The second section contends that this view of moral goodness does not provide Hare's moral philosophy with significant explanatory scope.

### **Supervenience: Modern versus Medieval**

Hare claims that Scotist supervenience has the same logical structure as the type of supervenience that one finds in analytic moral philosophy.<sup>123</sup> This belief has a

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<sup>123</sup>Hare's father, R. M. Hare, first utilized the term to refer to the relationship that evaluative properties have with natural properties. See R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 19; Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 21; and Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. "Supervenience." The discussion on analytic moral supervenience in this section largely follows Hare's summary in Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 21-22.

number of aspects. First, in this view, natural properties are distinct from moral properties, and they do not entail moral properties. Because natural properties do not entail moral properties, one cannot derive a moral conclusion from natural premises.<sup>124</sup> Second, particular moral properties, nonetheless, coincide with particular natural properties in such a way that the same moral properties always coincide with or supervene on the same natural properties. Even though, therefore, the relationship between the moral properties and the natural properties is not logical, the relationship is causal. The natural properties cause the moral properties. Third, because the same moral properties always coincide with the same natural properties, moral properties are universalizable.<sup>125</sup>

Instead of dividing moral properties from natural properties, Scotus separates moral goodness from primary goodness. For Scotus, primary goodness is when a substance does not lack any essential property.<sup>126</sup> Being, therefore, gives an entity primary goodness. Secondary goodness is when a property fits with or is suitable to (*conveniens*) another being, as bodily health is to a human.<sup>127</sup> Moral goodness is a type of secondary goodness. This secondary goodness, according to Hare's interpretation of Scotus, supervenes on primary goodness.<sup>128</sup>

A Scotist view of supervenience, like an analytic view of supervenience, contains a major denial and an affirmation. The primary denial of Scotist supervenience is that no natural teleology necessarily orders one to what is good. The only type of

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<sup>124</sup>Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 21.

<sup>125</sup>Baldwin highlights universalizability in his definition of supervenience: "In ethics, supervenience amounts to the thesis that moral values supervene on natural facts in the sense that situations which are alike in respect of all natural facts must also be alike in respect of all moral values." Baldwin, *Contemporary Philosophy*, 246.

<sup>126</sup>Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 211.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 210-11.

<sup>128</sup>Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," 21. Wolter translates the Latin word *superveniens* as "is over and above." Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 211.

teleology is supernatural. God is the end or *finis* of humanity, and no necessary route toward that end exists. Moral norms are, therefore, contingent. As in the analytic view of supervenience, one cannot deduce moral goodness from nature. Hare gives the example of sexuality. Procreation is a natural good, but celibacy does not contravene moral goodness. Likewise, although stealing and committing adultery are morally bad, nothing in human nature mandates that those acts be bad.

The primary affirmation of Scotist supervenience is that moral goodness accords with nature. Although moral norms are contingent, they are still “fitting”<sup>129</sup> or appropriate to human nature. When humans are morally good, they flourish. The distinction between this view and a eudaimonistic view is that for Hare many different means to flourishing exist. Although Scotus has the reputation of emphasizing the will to the exclusion of rationality,<sup>130</sup> he still maintains that what makes an act morally good is “mainly in its conformity to right reason.”<sup>131</sup> As in the analytic view of supervenience, therefore, moral norms are rational. Scotus takes into account the individual nature of morality; moral norms, therefore, fit human nature both at the collective and individual level. A central aspect of prescriptive realism includes reflection of the individual aspects of each person. This focus means that certain moral norms differ from person to person because each person is unique. Hare claims, moreover, “that what distinguishes us humans from each other is more valuable than, or at least equally valuable with, what we have in common.”<sup>132</sup> Whether at the communal level or individual level, human nature and moral norms are suitable to one another.

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<sup>129</sup>Hare, “Scotus on Morality and Nature,” 25. Scotus frequently uses the word *convenio* and its cognates to explain this relationship. See Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 210-11.

<sup>130</sup>Peter Leithart claims that the trajectory one sees in Scotus leads to Ockham: “Scotus led in a dualistic direction that set God over against his creation as pure, infinitely powerful will.” Peter J. Leithart, “Medieval Theology and the Roots of Modernity,” in *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*, ed. W. Andrew Hofferker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 171.

<sup>131</sup>Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 207.

<sup>132</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 22. Hare is summarizing Scotus’s theory of *haecceitas*. See

## Supervenience and Explanatory Scope

Although part of the reason for accepting a Scotist view of supervenience is theological,<sup>133</sup> supervenience appears to provide explanatory scope for Hare in the sense that Hare does not need to rely strictly on coordinating nature with morality. A loose coordination is all that is necessary. For instance, nature reveals conflicting desires. If one bases morality on nature, one must, according to Hare, find unity among a collection disparate and contradictory desires. If one only needs to demonstrate how moral norms coincide with some of those desires, then the task is not impossible.

**Larry Arnhart.** The way that Hare responds to the work of Larry Arnhart shows how Scotism helps Hare's position. In a criticism of Arnhart's ethical position,<sup>134</sup> Hare utilizes Arnhart's own concept of tragedy in assessing Arnhart's attempt to derive moral guidance from human nature. Moral tragedy is "whenever two natural desires conflict with no resolution by common self-interest."<sup>135</sup> Hare gives two moral tragedies in Arnhart's position, the first of which is sexual fidelity. Two of the ways that males, according to Arnhart, differ from females is that males desire more sexual experiences and have stronger desires to dominate. Hare concludes that if males can fulfill their male desire for dominance and promiscuity at the expense of the female desire for companionship, no moral reason exists for males to withhold their natural desires.

Hare responds to Arnhart by noting that "a practice can be wrong (not merely tragic) *even if it does* fulfill 'natural' desires by the 'naturally ruling' males."<sup>136</sup> He

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also idem, *God's Call*, 77. In both places, Hare correlates *haecceitas* with the white stone of Rev 2:17. As Hare explains in a later work, these statements apply to what is good, which is a broader category than what is obligatory. What makes something obligatory, for Hare, is the command of God. See idem, *God and Morality*, 104.

<sup>133</sup>Hare argues for God's freedom in legislating what he wills. See Hare, *God's Call*, 84-85.

<sup>134</sup>See Larry Arnhart, *Darwinian Natural Right: The Biological Ethics of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998).

<sup>135</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 70. See also Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 103-4.

<sup>136</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 70. Emphasis in original.

claims, “Aristotle and Arnhart are both wrong to hold that it follows from the fact that we naturally desire something that the satisfaction of that desire is good.”<sup>137</sup> Nature and morality are two different spheres. They must correlate, but only to a degree. Hare accounts for the different spheres through his Scotist view of supervenience. He is, therefore, able to avoid moral tragedies where Arnhart is not.

Hare sees a further benefit in Scotism in the way he is able to address evolutionary theory. Hare claims that non-human animals do not experience the affection for justice that humans do. He calls this difference “the affection gap.”<sup>138</sup> Those who ground morality in evolutionary theory must provide some sort of mechanism to traverse this gap. Part of the problem for those who attempt to derive moral norms from evolution, according to Hare, is that non-human ancestors of humans did not apparently have the affection for justice. Hare accepts evolution and speculates that a mechanism may have evolved to allow humans to experience the affection for justice.<sup>139</sup>

Whether or not Hare’s speculation is accurate, Hare does not need to demonstrate how moral norms arise from natural entities because an ontological distinction exists between morality and nature. If moral norms do not supervene on human nature and if evolutionary theory is the only explanation of morality, then traditional views Western morality collapse.<sup>140</sup> Evolutionary theory allows one to “learn

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<sup>137</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 71.

<sup>138</sup>Hare, “Evolutionary Theory and Theological Ethics,” 252. See also Hare, “Is There an Evolutionary Foundation for Human Morality?,” in *Evolution and Ethics: Human Morality in Biological and Religious Perspective*, ed. Philip Clayton and Jeffrey Schloss (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 201, and John E. Hare and Peter Singer, “Moral Mammals: Does Atheism or Theism Provide the Best Foundation for Human Worth and Morality?,” in *A Place for Truth: Leading Thinkers Explore Life’s Hardest Questions*, ed. Dallas Willard (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 182.

<sup>139</sup>Hare, “Evolutionary Theory and Theological Ethics,” 252. This same mechanism, according to Hare, may have evolved to allow humans to experience God while their non-human ancestors were not able to experience him.

<sup>140</sup>Hare calls his view of moral norms and human moral failings “the traditional view of both the moral demand . . . and also of our natural biological tendency to prefer the self.” Hare, “Is There an Evolutionary Foundation for Human Morality?,” 200.

more detail about what our natural capacities are, or, in Scotistic terms, we would learn more about the affection for advantage.”<sup>141</sup> A Scotist view of supervenience allows one to accept evolutionary theory without holding to the view that moral norms arise from evolution.

**The problem with supervenience and explanatory scope.** A number of difficulties exist for Hare’s view of supervenience. First, the problem with this claim is that without the theological bases, the reasons that one has for accepting a Scotist view of supervenience are considerably tenuous. If moral norms are contingent, then God is free to prescribe different moral norms to different individuals. Biblical characters are free to break certain norms of the Decalogue: the early church’s view of possessions (Acts 2:44), the Israelites’ plundering of Egypt (Exod 11:2 and 12:35), Hosea’s marriage to Gomer (Hos 1:2), and Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22).<sup>142</sup> Without one assuming that Christianity is true, he loses the reason one has for thinking that morality fits with nature in a Scotist way.

A second issue is that the central concept in this supervenience is inherently enigmatic. Hare never explains what the appropriateness of moral goodness with natural goodness actually is, nor does he give the sense in which one may falsify his thesis. He, therefore, supplies a puzzle for the answer of a problem. Hare does not explain whether fitting with nature means that moral norms must coincide with some natural desires or most natural desires. He gives no instruction as to how one knows when a moral norm coincides with enough desires to fit with nature. Scotist supervenience, in other words, does not explain the relationship that Hare claims that the view explains.

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<sup>141</sup>Hare, “Is There an Evolutionary Foundation for Human Morality?,” 201.

<sup>142</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 99. For Scotus’s treatment of this issue, upon which Hare largely relies, see Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, 268-87.

A third problem is that the fact that a moral position coincides with evolutionary theory does not necessarily enhance the theory's explanatory scope. In the United States, where Hare teaches, a significant percentage of the public rejects evolution.<sup>143</sup> More significantly, however, a growing number of atheists and agnostics are doubting the tenability of Darwinism.<sup>144</sup> As evolutionary theory becomes more dubitable, the amount of explanatory scope that Hare's view of supervenience provides decreases.

A final problem is that when Hare addresses goodness and human nature, he points to Aristotle as an example:

Imagine that we did not have the life of Christ as an example. Would we know simply from analyzing human nature that we should love our enemies, and forgive seventy times seven times, and take on the role of becoming each other's servants? I think, on the contrary, we would reach roughly Aristotle's conclusions from studying our natural inclinations to power and prestige. Aristotle lived almost two and a half millennia ago, and the society he knew was in many ways different from ours. But his account of the kind of life we naturally look for still fits "common sense" in many ways better than the life Christ patterned for us, which is a radical reversal of some of the values we still find attractive.<sup>145</sup>

Hare claims that without special revelation, one would most likely come to an Aristotelian picture of morality. Hare thus expects atheists to share his primary conception of goodness, yet he also expects that without revelation one would draw Aristotelian conclusions. These conclusions, moreover, contradict his primary conception of moral goodness. Hare, therefore, both expects and does not expect atheists to share his view about the relationship of moral goodness to nature.

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<sup>143</sup>Jonathan Gatehouse, "The Dumbing Down of American," *Maclean's*, May 26, 2014. Gatehouse claims that 42% of Americans reject evolution.

<sup>144</sup>See David Berlinski, *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 187-92; Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Bradley John Monton, *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2009).

<sup>145</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 152.

## **Conclusion**

The assumption of this dissertation is that, all things being equal, a moral philosophy that connects to more aspects of human existence are worthier of acceptance than those moral philosophies that do not have theses which coincide with or explain other areas of human life. The claim of chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation is that Alasdair MacIntyre's Aristotelianism exhibits significant explanatory scope. This chapter contains an examination of three possible areas within John Hare's prescriptive realism that appear to provide Hare with explanatory scope. Each of these issues, however, face significant problems regarding the claim to explanatory scope. On the issue of explanatory scope, MacIntyre's Aristotelianism, therefore, provides apologists with a more cogent framework upon which to argue for the truth of Christianity.

## CHAPTER 5

### KANTIAN APOLOGETICS

At least since writing *The Moral Gap*, the moral philosophy of Kant has exerted a tremendous amount of influence on the moral philosophy of John Hare.<sup>1</sup> In order to evaluate whether Hare's moral philosophy provides a significant contribution for proponents of moral arguments for the existence of God, one must see the ways in which Kant's moral philosophy informs and shapes Hare's moral philosophy. While the thesis of this dissertation is that Alasdair MacIntyre provides apologists with a more cogent moral philosophy than Hare does, the specific contention of this chapter and the following chapter is that MacIntyre's overall argument rests on stronger premises than Hare's overall argument.

This chapter focuses on the ways that the moral philosophies of Kant and R. M. Hare<sup>2</sup> affect Hare's own argument. Four main aspects of their work shape the way that Hare formulates his own major argument. These ideas are universality, prescriptivity, overridingness, and the ideal observer theory. The first major section of this chapter demonstrates the influence of Kant and R. M. Hare on Hare's work. The second major section provides an examination of Hare's argument, and the third second addresses an initial objection to Hare's Kantianism.

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<sup>1</sup>John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>I will continue referring to John Hare simply as "Hare" while retaining the initials, "R. M.," for the name of his father.

## Kant, R. M. Hare, and John Hare

Before examining the specific Kantian aspects to Hare's primary argument, one needs to review the structure of Hare's major argument:<sup>3</sup>

1. Moral experience entails a gap or separation between moral norms and human capabilities.
2. If naturalism is true, then this gap makes morality unviable.
3. If Christianity is true, then this gap does not make morality unviable.
4. Given the choice between Christianity and naturalism, Christianity must be true if morality is viable.

The primary concern of this chapter and the next chapter is the first premise. Hare defines the type of moral experience that leads one to see a gap between moral norms and human capabilities as definitively Kantian. Kantian morality entails a demand that supersedes human ability. Although in some areas Kant attempts to provide a solution to this moral gap, his attempts, according to Hare, are ultimately unsuccessful. Kant, however, correctly identified the basic structure of morality, and Hare retains this structure.<sup>4</sup> In next premise, he claims that naturalistic options also fail in bridging the moral gap. The third premise is that Christian doctrine provides solutions for this gap in the ways naturalism does not.<sup>5</sup> The conclusion is that Christianity is necessary to maintain the stability of morality.

Hare articulates his argument most fully in the *The Moral Gap*. In the first part of the book, he provides interpretations of Kant's writings and arguments that correspond to the first premise of his overall argument.<sup>6</sup> The ideas in the first section of this book

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<sup>3</sup>See chap. 1 of this dissertation for references of each premise in Hare's writings.

<sup>4</sup>For MacIntyre, Kant's failure was necessary. Kant was one of those who set forth "a scheme whose internal incoherence ensured the failure of the common philosophical project from the outset." Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 51.

<sup>5</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 37, 39. See also John E. Hare, "Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?," in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, ed. Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 85.

<sup>6</sup>See Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 1-96. For two similar, more succinct arguments, see John E. Hare, "Ethics and Religion: Two Kantian Arguments," *Philosophical Investigations* 34 (2011): 151-68.

provide the basis for Hare's moral apologetic. These ideas are the ideas that the introduction of this chapter mentions: universality, prescriptivity, overridingness, and the ideal observer theory. Each of the first three idea arises explicitly from Kant's writings, but R. M. Hare's interpretation and formulation of them affects Hare's own appropriations of them. The fourth idea, moreover, comes directly from R. M. Hare.

### **Categorical imperative**

One can see the Kantian nature of Hare's moral philosophy from the way he treats and appropriates Kant's categorical imperative. A major goal of Kantian philosophy generally and Kantian moral philosophy particularly is to maintain objectivity.<sup>7</sup> The categorical imperative is one of Kant's most important attempts to provide a solution to the issue of moral objectivity. Since all hypothetical imperatives are conditional, he claims, they do not provide moral agents with sufficient objectivity. A categorical imperative is, on the other hand, unconditional and does not depend on fluctuating empirical conditions.

The first version of the categorical imperative is the formula of universal law: "*Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.*"<sup>8</sup> If the maxim of an action is a universal law, then the maxim does not vary from situation to situation and is, therefore, objective.<sup>9</sup> Kant reformulates the categorical imperative in the formula of the end in itself: "*Act in such a way that you*

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<sup>7</sup>For objectivity in Kant's broader philosophical views, see Roger Scruton, *Kant: A Very Short Introduction*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19. For objectivity in his moral philosophy, see *ibid.*, 73.

<sup>8</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (1956; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 88. Italics in original. Kant claims that only one categorical imperative exists, but he provides a number of different formulations.

<sup>9</sup>Kant distinguishes between a maxim and a law: "A *maxim* is a subjective principle of action and must be distinguished from an *objective principle* – namely, a practical law. The former contains a practical rule determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or again his inclination): it is thus a principle on which the subject *acts*. A law, on the other hand, is an objective principle valid for every rational being; and it is a principle on which he *ought to act* – that is, an imperative." *Ibid.*, 88n. Italics in original. For a discussion of a maxim, see Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 8-9.

*always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end.*<sup>10</sup> For Kant, human beings are rational creatures, and rational creatures deserve for others to treat them as ends.

The importance of the categorical imperative in Kantian moral philosophy demonstrates that universality is a major aspect of morality. A moral agent must treat all human beings equally since all humans are by definition rational beings. The scope of morality does not depend on particular roles or any other contingent reality; the scope is universal. Since humans are by definition rational, all human beings constitute the moral realm, which Kant calls, a “kingdom of ends.”<sup>11</sup>

Hare affirms both Kant’s goal and solution. Objectivity is a necessary goal for morality, and the categorical imperative provides objectivity.<sup>12</sup> For Hare, moral demands must be objective if moral norms are truly to be demands and not recommendations. Hare, moreover, accepts both the formula of universal law and the formula of the end in itself.<sup>13</sup> The universal nature of morality is a vital aspect of morality for Hare, and the fact that other people are ends limits the range of one’s actions.<sup>14</sup> For Hare, moreover, all human beings constitute a kingdom of ends and deserve equal treatment.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 96. The italics of this second quote are also in the original.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>12</sup>John E. Hare, *Why Bother Being Good? The Place of God in the Moral Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 118. One must note, in light of the other features that this chapter addresses, that the categorical imperative is not the only solution for objectivity for either Kant or Hare.

<sup>13</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 8-15.

<sup>14</sup>Hare points out that Kant does not mean *end* in an Aristotelian sense. Each person, in this view, is “a limit or constraint on our action.” Moreover, Hare notes how autonomy and treating others as ends are related: “I am constrained, according to this formula, by the consideration that it is wrong, other things being equal, to impede the agency of others. To treat another human being as merely a means is to ignore the other as a center of agency.” Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 15. Hare claims that a central part of his moral philosophy is that “the community ‘we’ belong to already contains this ideal demand for a global but also fully detailed concern for every person.” Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 44.

In using the categorical imperative, Hare follows Kant in using the universal nature of morality to maintain the objectivity of morality; universality also maintains the rational nature of morality. Kant, in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, posits two ultimate maxims. One of these maxims is good, and one is evil. The good maxim accords all actions with reason and subordinates self-love to reason or duty, and the evil maxim subordinates reason or duty to self-love.<sup>16</sup> The way one determines which maxims to accept is through using the categorical imperative as a litmus test. For example, if one proposes the evil maxim as a possible option in a situation, a contradiction results.<sup>17</sup> Since all people require help at some point, no one can rationally will the following maxim: “Let everyone pursue his own gain and never help others.” Otherwise, no one would help anyone. All must will that someone help them. If, however, an individual’s actions always follow from self-love, then that person both is and is not willing self-love. He or she, according to Kant, is willing a contradiction.<sup>18</sup>

### **R. M. Hare’s Influence on Hare**

The section above demonstrates the universal nature of morality for Hare. One’s will is directed toward all human beings as such. In appropriating the Kantian universal nature of morality, Hare utilizes the work of R. M. Hare, whom he claims is an example of a contemporary Kantian.<sup>19</sup> Hare follows R. M. Hare in claiming that moral

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<sup>16</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82-83. See also Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 8, and Scruton, *Kant*, 85-86. The reason that willing is so important for Kant is because he distinguishes actions that accord with duty from actions that arise from duty: “The concept of duty thus requires of action that it objectively agree with the law, while of the maxim of the action it demands subjective respect for the law as the sole mode of determining the will through itself. And thereon rests the distinction between consciousness of having acted *according to duty* and *from duty*, i.e., from respect for the law. The former, legality, is possible even if inclinations alone are the determining grounds of the will, but the latter, morality or moral worth, can be conceded only where the action occurs from duty, i.e., merely for the sake of the law.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), 188. Emphasis in original.

<sup>17</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 13-14. See also Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 89.

<sup>18</sup>For other examples, see Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 89-91.

<sup>19</sup>For R. M. Hare’s treatment of Kant, see R. M. Hare, “Could Kant have been a Utilitarian?,”

terms are by definition “universalizable,” “prescriptive,” and “overriding.”<sup>20</sup> These three concepts correspond to Kantian ideas.

The concept of universalizability is a way to specify universal aspects of Kant’s moral philosophy.<sup>21</sup> If an action is universalizable, then a moral agent would will any agent to perform the same action even if none the particular details were the same. Hare notes that if an action is universalizable, then that action is also reversible: “It is a feature of our ordinary usage that we prescribe that others ought to do to us only what we prescribe that we should do to them if the roles were reversed.”<sup>22</sup> R. M. Hare explicitly connects universalizability to the categorical imperative. On the one hand, if an action is universalizable, then that action meets the demands of the categorical imperative.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, if an action meets the demands of the categorical imperative, then the action is universalizable.

To see how this works, one may trace the implications of the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative demands that one always treat others as ends. To treat others as ends means that one needs to define the scope of the others that one treats, and, as the section above notes, this scope is the kingdom of ends. A kingdom of ends, moreover, entails that the moral demand be universal. To be moral, therefore, is to treat every human being as of equal worth and dignity. If a moral agent treats one person in a moral way, they recognize the dignity and worth of that individual. The dignity and worth

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*Utilitas* 5 (1993): 1-16.

<sup>20</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 17-19. See also R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 20-24.

<sup>21</sup>For a defense of universalizability, see R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 34-40. For Hare’s early use of this concept, see John E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982), 2.

<sup>22</sup>Hare and Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 2.

<sup>23</sup>R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 34.

of that individual, however, is the same if any other individual were to be in the situation of the first recipient of the moral action.

One additional point is important about both the categorical imperative and the concept of universalizability. Both concepts exclude the particular or contingent aspects from morality. Hare claims that in concluding what one's duty is, one is moving from instances of a phenomenon to a universal law in the way that a scientist does.<sup>24</sup> The universal laws are what matters. The categorical imperative only deals with what is universal to humans and not to particularities, and universalizability also deals only with those universal elements. When a person, therefore, wills particularities in the kingdom of ends, that individual is not making a moral judgment.<sup>25</sup>

R. M. Hare's qualification that a moral evaluation be prescriptive corresponds to Kant's notion that moral evaluations are imperatives. Kant claims that the difference between a law and a maxim is the imperatival force of the law. A maxim is a principle valid for an individual, but a law is a principle upon which every rational being "*ought to act*."<sup>26</sup> For R. M. Hare, to make a moral judgment is to prescribe an action, and this prescription has "force."<sup>27</sup> Many moral judgments do not take the form of imperatives. For instance, if a person says, "It is always wrong to lie," then the sentence does not take the form of an imperative. The sentence, nonetheless, still entails an imperative: "Do not ever lie." R. M. Hare, therefore, defines prescriptivity as "the property of entailing at least one imperative."<sup>28</sup> Hare claims, therefore, that for Kant and R. M. Hare, "To make a

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<sup>24</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 17-18. According to Hare, morality "requires willingness to continue subscription to the maxim of an action even if all individual or singular reference is excluded from it." Ibid., 10.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>26</sup>Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*, 88n. Emphasis in original.

<sup>27</sup>R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 56.

<sup>28</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 21.

moral judgment is to tell oneself, or someone else, what to do.”<sup>29</sup> For Hare, therefore, morality always includes a demand.

The third aspect of the moral demand that Hare takes from R. M. Hare through Kant is what R. M. Hare calls the “overridingness”<sup>30</sup> of moral evaluation. In this view, what makes a moral evaluation a moral evaluation and not some other type of evaluation is that the moral judgment needs to be more important than any other factor.<sup>31</sup> If a military officer concludes that torturing prisoners is, though convenient, always wrong, then the importance of the moral judgment overrides the importance of any benefit the officer receives from torturing prisoners. For Kant, likewise, duty supersedes all other reasons for acting.<sup>32</sup> This aspect of R. M. Hare’s view corresponds to the categorical nature of Kant’s imperative, which is unconditional.

### **Ideal Observer Theory**

An additional aspect of R. M. Hare’s moral philosophy surfaces in Hare’s view of the moral demand. In this aspect, R. M. Hare departs from Kant in attempting to formulate a rapprochement between Kantianism and utilitarianism. R. M. Hare observes that moral judgments occur at two levels. The first level is the immediate judgment a person makes. When a middle-aged woman sees teenagers mocking a homeless man in the middle of winter, she makes a judgment concerning what they are doing, and that

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<sup>29</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 18.

<sup>30</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 24.

<sup>31</sup>For the relationship between the “overriding” nature of moral truths and the existence of God, see C. Stephen Layman, “A Moral Argument for the Existence of God,” in *Is Goodness without God Good Enough? A Debate on Faith, Secularism, and Ethics*, ed. Robert K. Garcia and Nathan L. King (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 49-65; idem, “God and the Moral Order,” *Faith and Philosophy* 19, (2002): 304-316; idem, “God and the Moral Order: Replies to Objections” *Faith and Philosophy* 23, (2006): 209-212. See also Sarah Stroud, “Moral Overridingness and Moral Theory,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (1998): 170-89.

<sup>32</sup>See Kant’s paean to duty in Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 193. See also Scruton, *Kant*, 88-90.

judgment is immediate. She does not infer specific evaluations from general principles. This level of judgment, according to R. M. Hare, is the intuitive level of judgment.

Many or most of moral judgments only occur at the intuitive level. Since moral principles sometimes appear to contradict one another, however, then one must often reflect on the nature of principles. The same middle-aged woman arrives at work, and her employer asks, "How do you like my new shirt?" If she loathes the shirt, she must reflect on the principles of honesty and kindness. This reflection is the critical level of moral judgment.<sup>33</sup>

In comparing principles, a traditional utilitarian is concerned with how much pleasure an action or rule produces. The difference between R. M. Hare's critical level of moral judgment and traditional utilitarianism is that R. M. Hare claims that one should evaluate consequences based on what individuals prefer. In criticizing judgments at the intuitive level of moral thought, one needs to take into account "preference-satisfactions"<sup>34</sup> of as many people as possible. Hare claims that in this view, "we ask about each principle whether its adoption by everyone would contribute to the satisfaction of the largest number of preferences (weighted for the intensity of preference) of all the affected parties."<sup>35</sup>

If the concept of overridingness is proportional to universality, as R. M. Hare and Hare take the relationship to be, then moral evaluations override other moral evaluations depending on how universal each is. In order to make complete moral

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<sup>33</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 25. See also Hare and Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 4-8, and Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 18-19.

<sup>34</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 91. Because preferences and pleasure are not the same, Hare and Joynt reject the utilitarian label for consequentialism. See also Hare and Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 5, and John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 273.

<sup>35</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 18-19. Hare claims that R. M. Hare's evaluation of preferences corresponds to Kant's evaluation of all the ends of each affected member. This connection, however, is far more tenuous than, for instance, the connection between the categorical imperative and universalizability. The basis of Kant's claim lies in the rational nature of humanity. See *ibid.*, 19.

judgment, therefore, one must evaluate a decision that reflects the consequences of that decision on every human being. In light of these concepts, Hare notes that two important factors are necessary for a complete moral theory: omniscience of all preferences and complete disinterestedness or impartiality regarding the involved parties.<sup>36</sup> The paradigm for moral thought is, therefore, the perspective of some ideal observer.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Moral Gap**

In light of the above considerations, Hare concludes that the moral demand that all human beings encounter is universal, prescriptive, and overriding. Moral norms, moreover, presuppose the perspective of some ideal observer. Becoming a moral individual, in this view, is not an easy task. If one accepts this view of morality and yet rejects Christianity, three options remain.<sup>38</sup> The first option is that one provide a naturalistic remedy. Hare argues that naturalistic remedies such as evolutionary progress and economic solutions are all insufficient.<sup>39</sup> The second option is to change the assessment of what humans can accomplish. Hare calls this option, “puffing up the capacity,”<sup>40</sup> and he argues that a distorted view of humanity results from this option. The third option is to lower the standard of moral norms, and lowering the standard often occurs through narrowing the scope of morality. Hare defends the universal nature of morality one finds in the works of Kant and R. M. Hare against those who attempt to lower the demand.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 19.

<sup>37</sup>R. M. Hare calls this ideal observer an archangel. See R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 44. See also Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 19. See also Charles Taliaferro, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 206-11. Taliaferro claims that David Hume, Adam Smith, Henry Sidgwick, Roderick Firth, R. M. Hare, and Thomas Carson have all put forth some first of the Ideal Observer Theory.

<sup>38</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 25-26.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 170-88. See also Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 51-53.

<sup>40</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 99-115.

<sup>41</sup>See *ibid.*, 142-69, and Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 42-50, 173-93.

The fourth option is to assume that morality is simply impossible. Against this option, Hare upholds the Kantian claim that moral obligation implies ability. A major tenet of Kantian ethics is that if a moral agent has an obligation to perform an action, then that agent has the ability to perform that action.<sup>42</sup> Kant claims that “duty commands nothing but what we can do.”<sup>43</sup> Hare defends this point by claiming that the reverse position is nonsensical: “It seems unreasonable, indeed incoherent, to hold people accountable to standards that they are unable to reach. One way to put this is that ‘ought’ implies ‘can’.”<sup>44</sup>

The reason why this point is integral to Kantian ethics is because Kant holds that the freedom of the moral agent means that the moral agent is able to perform the dictates of duty. Without this freedom, morality is an illusion. For Kant, the three a priori transcendental ideas of morality are God, freedom, and immortality. Moral thought and action presuppose all of these ideas, but freedom is the most important of the three:

The concept of freedom, in so far as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as mere ideas, are unsupported by anything in speculative reason now attach themselves to the concept of freedom and gain, with it and through it, stability and objective reality.<sup>45</sup>

If a decision is the morally right decision to make, then a person must be free to make that decision.

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<sup>42</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 38. See also Scruton, *Kant*, 74. For R. M. Hare’s defense of this point, see R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 51-66.

<sup>43</sup>Kant, *Reason and Rational Theology*, 92.

<sup>44</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 31. See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 196.

<sup>45</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 118.

## Hare's Solution to the Moral Gap

Given the above picture of morality, Hare claims that Christianity provides the resources to address the moral gap. He also answers this question in a way to show that his answer also differs significantly from Kant's answers to this dilemma. Three aspects of the moral demand lead one to conclude that Christianity provides a satisfactory answer. First, Christianity sets forth a view of divine grace that answers Spener's problem that Kant is unable to answer. Second, Christianity supplies what Hare calls "moral faith."<sup>46</sup> Third, Christianity best explains the ideal observer theory that R. M. Hare sets forth.

## Kant and Revealed Religion

In order to understand how Hare argues for the need for Christian doctrine, one needs to see how Hare departs from a Kantian view of religion. Kant's primary concern in religion as a philosopher is not in "revealed religion," but in "pure rational religion."<sup>47</sup> In explaining these two ways of thinking about religion, Kant gives the example of two concentric circles.<sup>48</sup> The inner circle corresponds to religion that one bases completely on reason, and the outer circle corresponds to religion that one bases on revelation. Revealed religion includes beliefs such as the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin in Bethlehem and the belief that Moses received the Decalogue at Mount Sinai, but revealed religion also includes moral norms such as the categorical imperative. Rational religion is devoid of any historical or even empirical reference and is similar to what Kant means when he refers to "pure moral philosophy,"<sup>49</sup> which is philosophy that is "completely cleansed of everything that can only be empirical and appropriate to anthropology."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 69.

<sup>47</sup>Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 64.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. See also Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 40.

<sup>49</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 56.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 57.

This “pure religion of reason”<sup>51</sup> is unlike revealed religion in the sense that pure religion contains nothing but universal elements.<sup>52</sup>

Kant maintains that morality has a close relationship both to rational religion and revealed religion. On the one hand, morality presupposes the existence of God.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, one can only know whether a particular revealed religion is legitimate through whether that religion corresponds to a true morality and also rational religion. Kant gives the following definition of revealed religion, and he compares revealed religion to natural religion:

Religion is (subjectively considered) the recognition of all our duties as divine commands. That religion, in which I must first know that something is a divine command in order that I recognize it as my duty, is revealed religion (or a religion which requires a revelation); by contrast, that religion in which I must first know that something is duty before I can acknowledge it as a divine command is natural religion.<sup>54</sup>

Rational religion prioritizes moral norms over divine commands. Kant claims that one needs to know rational religion before one can recognize genuine revealed religion. The fact that rational religion prioritizes moral norms accessible by reason alone does not mean that revealed religion is false or useless. One can hold both to the priority of reason in recognizing divine commands and that historical religious events occurred. A religion can be both natural and revealed “if it is so constituted that human beings *could and ought to have* arrived at it on their own through the mere use of their reason, even though they *would* not have come to it as early or as extensively as is required.”<sup>55</sup> In this

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<sup>51</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 39.

<sup>52</sup>Hare claims that, nonetheless, “there is nothing in the idea of revelation to prevent this pure religion of reason from being *revealed* by God to human beings.” Ibid. Italics in original. Kant also claims that a philosopher’s domain is pure religion, not revealed religion. See Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 64.

<sup>53</sup>Scruton, *Kant*, 96-97.

<sup>54</sup>Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 177.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 178. See also Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 44.

setting, revealed religion at a “given time and a given place might be wise and very advantageous to the human race.”<sup>56</sup>

Kant notes that, in revealed religion, knowledge is not possible.<sup>57</sup> One can never know whether God exists or whether Jesus rose from the dead, but knowledge is not the point of religion. The point of religion is moral improvement. To know, moreover, whether a particular revealed religion is legitimate, one must determine whether or not that particular revealed religion brings about moral improvement. As long as religion supports and furthers morality, then Kant supports revealed religion.<sup>58</sup> Since some individuals are rationally weaker than others, some people need revealed religion to bring about the moral improvement that would not otherwise come.

### **Kantian Need for Conversion**

Hare claims that Kant’s view of rational religion does not allow him to deal satisfactorily with problems that the moral gap creates. First, Kant recognizes that from birth humans have a “maxim”<sup>59</sup> to prioritize personal pleasure over duty, and this maxim is the ultimately evil maxim. Human moral evil is thus innate and radical. The opposite maxim is to prioritize duty over pleasure. For genuinely moral action to be possible, therefore, the basic maxim in a person’s life to change requires a fundamental shift. A

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<sup>56</sup>Kant, *Reason and Rational Theology*, 178.

<sup>57</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 47. In support of the claim that no one can verify Scripture as the Word of God, Kant states, “For if God should really speak to a human being, the latter could still never know that it was God speaking. It is quite impossible for a human being to apprehend the infinite by his senses, distinguish it from sensible beings, and *be acquainted with it as such.*” Immanuel Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:63, in Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 283. Hare also claims that Kant believed most of the stories, but that whether or not Kant believed is irrelevant to the central claim. See Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 48. For an opposing view, see W. Andrew Hoffercker, “Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginning of the Modern Culture Wars,” in *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*, ed. W. Andrew Hoffercker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 267.

<sup>58</sup>Hare claims concerning how a believer should treat biblical precepts that “Kant’s attitude is that as long as the statutes given in the Bible are consistent with practical reason, she should, if she is among those ‘strengthened’ by the biblical stories, treat the statutes as commands of God.” Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 45.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

person has to experience a “revolution of the will.”<sup>60</sup> Kant names this problem after the pietist, Jacob Spener. Spener’s problem is that “the end of religious instruction must be to make us *other* human beings and not merely better human beings (as if we were already good but only negligent about the degree of our goodness).”<sup>61</sup> Kantian moral philosophy, therefore, requires a human being to become altogether new.

The problem is that Kantian rational religion has no mechanism whereby the moral agent may become a different person. Kant faces a problem similar to the problem traditional Christians face. If God is completely just and requires moral perfection, he cannot consider a person just who has had a radically evil will from birth. If a person does become a genuinely new individual, then the wrongs that person committed before the change “is a debt which is impossible for him to wipe out.”<sup>62</sup> The Protestant answer to this dilemma is the substitutionary atonement.<sup>63</sup> Two reasons, however, keep Kant from accepting penal substitution as an answer to Spener’s problem. The first reason is that the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth is a historical event, and a historical contingency cannot be a part of pure religion.<sup>64</sup> The second reason is that Kant does not believe that God can transfer guilt.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 53. See also Hare, “Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable,” 93. Kant describes this change in the following way: “This evil is *radical*, since it corrupts the ground of all maxims; as natural propensity, it is also not to be *extirpated* through human forces, for this could only happen through good maxims – something that cannot take place if the subjective supreme ground of all maxims is presupposed to be corrupted.” Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 83. Emphasis in original.

<sup>61</sup>Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 276. Emphasis in original. Carl Henry claims that “at no point did Kant approach so closely to Christian theology as in grappling with the fact of radical evil.” Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 112n7.

<sup>62</sup>Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 112.

<sup>63</sup>Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 158-75.

<sup>64</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 57.

<sup>65</sup>Kant’s reason for this second problem is simply the personal nature of moral failing. He claims that moral guilt “is not a *transmissible* liability which can be made over to somebody else, in the manner of a financial debt (where it is all the same to the creditor whether the debtor himself pays up, or somebody else from him), but the *most personal* of all liabilities, namely a debt of sins which only the culprit, not the innocent, can bear, however magnanimous the innocent might be in wanting to take the debt

According to Hare, what worsens Kant's problem is that Kant holds to a principle that Hare calls, "the Stoic maxim."<sup>66</sup> This proposition is "that a person herself must make or have made herself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, she is to become."<sup>67</sup> Because of his rejection of revealed religion, Kant cannot accept divine grace as having any practical relevance in his moral philosophy. Because human moral depravity is innate, a radical conversion must occur. Without divine assistance, Kant has no mechanism for this necessary moral transformation.<sup>68</sup> Hare concludes that this problem for Kant's own view is intractable:

the revolution of the will both is possible (because obligatory) and impossible (because the ground of our maxims is corrupt). What Kant has to do is to show that the revolution is possible, and he does this by pointing to the possibility of supernatural assistance. His failure, however, is to show how he can appeal to such assistance given the rest of his theory, and in particular given to the Stoic maxim.<sup>69</sup>

Kant's view of radical evil ultimately causes human effort to be insufficient, and he has no mechanism to overcome this problem.

### **Christian Conversion**

Hare claims that Christianity satisfactorily addresses this problem. Hare points to five specifically Christian doctrines to provide an answer to Kant: repentance, forgiveness, atonement, justification, and sanctification. Christianity, according to Hare,

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upon himself for the other." Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 113.

<sup>66</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 60.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 60. For loose parallels, see Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 3, 12, and Epictetus, *Diatribae*, 1, 11, 37.

<sup>68</sup>Kant concludes, "This conflict cannot be mediated through insight into the causal determination of the freedom of a human being, i.e., into the causes that make a human being become good or bad: in other words, it cannot be resolved theoretically, for this question totally surpasses the speculative capacity of our reason." Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 148.

<sup>69</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 60-61. Hare further concludes "that this translation [of historical Christianity into the religion of pure reason] leaves him with an incoherence in practical reason. It is not merely that he cannot explain *how* the moral gap is bridged; such an explanation, he can legitimately claim, is beyond him. The problem is that he cannot give us a reason to suppose *that* the gap is bridgeable, given the rest of his theory." Ibid., 67.

teaches that individuals can repent of living under the evil maxim.<sup>70</sup> A Christian view of divine forgiveness means that the effects of defying the moral law are not permanent for those who repent.<sup>71</sup> The doctrine of the atonement means that God remains perfectly just and yet is able to forgive one's moral failings.<sup>72</sup> Justification erases the debt of those who have faith and grants them the ability to live in a new way.<sup>73</sup> Sanctification provides believers with resources to live the moral life. These resources, moreover, are only available through grace.<sup>74</sup>

Kant himself admits the problem of conversion "cannot be resolved theoretically."<sup>75</sup> This problem, moreover, "totally surpasses the speculative capacity of our reason."<sup>76</sup> Hare concludes that one must reject Kantian natural religion in order to satisfy the conditions of his morality. Grace is incompatible with the Stoic maxim. Since grace allows one to satisfy the conditions of morality and since the Stoic maxim does not, one must reject the Stoic maxim and accept a Christian view of grace in order for Kantian morality to be viable.

### **Moral Faith**

Moral faith is the view that the ultimate viability of morality requires faith. For both Hare and Kant, moral faith includes the belief that happiness and moral goodness ultimately coincide.<sup>77</sup> Moral faith comes from Kant's idea concerning "the highest

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<sup>70</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 205.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 226.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 209-11.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 264-65.

<sup>75</sup>Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 148.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 69-70. Hare actually claims that for Kant, moral faith includes two beliefs, the other of which is belief that a radical moral change mysteriously occurs enabling a moral agent to progress morally. The present section does not deal with this aspect of moral faith since the previous

good,”<sup>78</sup> which, for Kant, is the conjoining of virtue and happiness.<sup>79</sup> Although Kant denies that one ever has a moral obligation to act for the sake of happiness, the virtuous person still deserves happiness. For Hare, the highest good is “happiness proportional to virtue; the more virtue [leads to] the more happiness, and the less virtue [leads to] the less happiness.”<sup>80</sup>

For a Kantian like Hare, the purpose of moral action cannot be one’s own happiness. One must seek the happiness of others.<sup>81</sup> Moral action, therefore, still requires one to will the happiness and virtue of others. If, moreover, morality is universal, then one is willing one’s own happiness in a way that does not surpass the concern for the happiness of others. In a world with radical moral evil, Kant’s highest good appears to be impossible. Virtue and happiness are forever separate. If the Christian God exists, however, then moral actions are not ultimately futile. Kant’s highest good will come to fruition in the future: “We need belief in providence, the belief that the world is so ordered that a person’s own virtue is reliably connected with her own happiness, *whether other people are virtuous or not.*”<sup>82</sup> The finite nature of moral agents lead those agents to pursue happiness, but the moral law places the obligation upon them to pursue virtue. With belief in God, these two goals are not contradictory.<sup>83</sup> The Kantian concept of moral faith then leads to a belief in Christian providence.

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section dealt with conversion.

<sup>78</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 216. He attempts to combine the Epicurean and Stoic positions.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>80</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 70.

<sup>81</sup>Hare, “Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?,” 86-87.

<sup>82</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 83.

<sup>83</sup>Hare, “Is Moral Goodness without Belief in God Rationally Stable?,” 93.

## **Ignorance and the Moral Gap**

Both R. M. Hare and Kant have views which require that the moral agent remain ignorant as to whether he or she is progressing morally. For R. M. Hare, this aspect of his moral view is evident in his ideal observer theory. For Kant, this claim to ignorance is more general. In both cases, Hare points to problems in these moral views which broaden the moral gap, and then Hare shows how Christianity addresses this problem.

**Ideal observer theory.** Hare connects R. M. Hare's ideal observer theory to Christianity. As the previous section above noted, a complete moral judgment, according to R. M. Hare, requires that moral judgments have a perspective that has "unlimited impartiality and unlimited information necessary to carry out critical thinking successfully."<sup>84</sup> If a person acts at the most fully moral level, his or her actions reflect what a completely impartial and omniscient individual would have recommended. Only from this perspective can a moral judgment be completely overriding.<sup>85</sup>

The problem with R. M. Hare's view is that human beings are so far from being able to act in this way that they cannot even approximate omniscience. R. M. Hare acknowledges that all people exhibit favoritism and a lack of empathy. He admits, "We human beings are not gifted with so much sensitivity or sympathy, and for that reason have to make do for the most part with intuitive thinking."<sup>86</sup> Since the overriding quality of moral judgments only applies to moral thinking at the critical level, then moral judgments do not have the overriding quality that R. M. Hare asserts. Moral judgments

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<sup>84</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 22.

<sup>85</sup>Hare notes that R. M. Hare is actually postulating the existence of God. Hare claims "that the position of the archangel is also taken to be the position of God. It is God who has the unlimited impartiality and unlimited information necessary to carry out critical thinking successfully." See *ibid*.

<sup>86</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 99.

are incomplete, and that the fact that they are always essentially incomplete creates a moral gap in between moral requirements and ability.<sup>87</sup>

Hare points out that this predicament does not deter R. M. Hare from pointing out the need for pursuing morality. Hare states, “R. M. Hare is sure that we have to *try* to do critical thinking, just as Kant is sure that we ought to try to follow practical reason; but in both cases there is the recognition of an apparent gap for us (though not for the God postulated by morality) between the ‘ought’ and the ‘can’.”<sup>88</sup> At the conclusion of *Moral Thinking*, R. M. Hare notes that even though his evidence that virtue tends to lead to happiness is purely anecdotal, he chooses to believe that the world works in that way.<sup>89</sup>

**Kantian skepticism.** Although Kant’s universality does not lead him to posit the perspective of an ideal observer in the same way that R. M. Hare’s view does, Kant recognizes the difficulty of moral action. This difficulty arises from two types of ignorance. In order to recognize the poignancy of the first type of ignorance, one may compare what Kant states with an example that Allen Wood gives in explaining Kant’s view of moral motivation.<sup>90</sup> A man works for a few decades to improve the conditions of housing in a particular area. The situation of the housing is unjust, and the man seeks for the local government to create a more just situation for those living in the community. The man happens to live in the community, and his own living conditions improve as a result of the change. Wood claims that within a Kantian framework, if the motivation for the man’s diligent work arose simply from a desire to improve his own living situation,

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<sup>87</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 23.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>89</sup>R. M. Hare, *Morality Thinking*, 205. R. M. Hare admits that his position is based on a baseless fideism. Nonetheless, he admits that he would still rear his children in such a way that morality is very important to them. It is surely ironic that his own son claims that the father’s moral philosophy is tenuous because of this fideism.

<sup>90</sup>Allen W. Wood, *Kant’s Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 48-49.

then the man's actions were not moral. If the motivation, however, was for the situation to become just, then the man's actions were moral regardless of his own improved conditions. Wood summarizes Kant's view by claiming that "there is nothing 'stealthy' about desire, granted that the motivation of one's volition is pure."<sup>91</sup>

The problem with Kant's view is that even Kant recognizes that one can never know whether or not one's actions are pure. Moral agents universally experience doubts as to whether they perform actions solely for the sake of duty. One may never know if one's actions are truly moral or if they are mixed with self-interest:

In actual fact it is absolutely impossible for experience to establish with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action in other respects right has rested solely on moral grounds and on the thought of one's duty. It is indeed at times the case that after the keenest self-examination we find nothing that without the moral motive of duty could have been strong enough to move us to this or that good action and to so great a sacrifice; but we cannot infer from this with certainty that it is not some secret impulse of self-love which has actually, under the mere show of the Idea of duty, been the cause genuinely determining our will.<sup>92</sup>

Moral agents simply lack the self-knowledge to know whether or not moral action is even possible.

Such skepticism regarding the moral or immoral nature of one's own actions does not deter Kant from the importance and nobility of the moral life. The image that Kant uses in demonstrating the importance of morality illustrates the problem that the second type of ignorance creates. Kant claims that knowledge of God is impossible.<sup>93</sup> Even though one must always remain ignorant as to whether God exists, Kant still claims that people are obligated to treat the moral law as if those obligations are commands of God.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 49.

<sup>92</sup>Kant, *Ground Work of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 74-75.

<sup>93</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 237. Knowledge that God does not exist, however, is also impossible for Kant. See Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 23. For a discussion about the relationship between knowledge and faith in Kant's philosophy, see Hare, *God and Morality*, 137.

<sup>94</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 232. Iris

**Hare's conclusion.** The skepticism of R. M. Hare and Kant concerning whether or not humans are genuinely able to be moral leads Hare to make three conclusions. From the moral earnestness of both thinkers one can conclude that morality is something in which people should engage. From their high standards, one may conclude that people do not have the capacity to fulfill moral demands. The ideal observer theory of R. M. Hare and the analogy that Kant gives leads one to believe that the ethical demand is "something that I should treat as the command of some other at least possible being who is practicing it."<sup>95</sup> For R. M. Hare, that being is an ideal observer that Hare identifies as God, and for Kant, that being is also God.

The three conclusions to which Hare comes lead him to claim that the type of moral view that Kantian moral philosophy entails has three parts. The three components are moral norms, human inability, and the hypothetical keeper of moral norms.<sup>96</sup> Hare's criticism of this view of morality in both R. M. Hare's framework and in Kant's framework is twofold. First, neither view justifies confidence in carrying out moral endeavors. Both views entail a costly view of morality. To make decisions that go against naturally selfish tendencies incurs pain. Kant notes that because of the great struggle the moral action requires, the etymology of the word *virtue*, which originally had the meaning of courage, is appropriate: "To become a morally good human being is not enough simply to let the germ of the god which lies in our species develop unhindered; there is in us an active and opposing cause of evil which is also to be combatted."<sup>97</sup> R. M.

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Murdoch insinuates that Kant's language is vulnerable to the type of critique that Hare more explicitly provides, which is discussed below: "It may be said of Kant, that for a man who does not (strictly) believe in God, God's name is (especially later in life) embarrassingly often upon his lips. . . . Kant makes use of God. Well, are we to buy an 'as though' or 'as if' religion? Plato's 'as ifs' occur in contexts where it is plain that we are being taught by a story." See Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 448.

<sup>95</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 23.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>97</sup>Kant, *Reason and Rational Theology*, 101. Kant later approvingly quotes Eph 6:12. See *ibid.*,

Hare notes his own failure in effecting good, and he, unlike Kant, divides human beings into saints and plain persons because of the ubiquity of moral failure.<sup>98</sup>

The second observation is that the real existence of the Christian God rather than the hypothetical existence of God erases the moral skepticism. If morality is to have the overriding quality that R. M. Hare and Kant claim, then a God who has the perspective and character of an ideal observer must communicate moral truth.<sup>99</sup> Otherwise, those pursuing morality will inexorably lead to fruitless lives. Neither Kant nor R. M. Hare have a secular equivalent to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or the assurance of salvation. For these reasons, Hare concludes that if no one supplies a substitute for Christianity, then Kantian morality simply lacks any stability: “The solution is that even though ‘ought implies can’, ‘ought’ does not imply ‘can by our own devices’ but rather ‘can, given the assistance available’.”<sup>100</sup> Christianity provides the assistance that Kant and R. M. Hare do not.

The first premise of Hare’s argument that this chapter provides is that moral experience entails a gap or separation between moral norms and human capabilities. The way that Hare defines moral experience necessarily includes the Kantian concepts of the categorical imperative, universalizability, and overridingness. Hare’s argument is that morality is not a viable endeavor without Christianity. The claim is that Kantian premises lead to a Christian conclusion. In light of R. M. Hare’s additions to the Kantian nature of his thought, these Kantian premises, according to Hare, lead even more strongly to the moral necessity that God exists.

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<sup>98</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 202-3. Cf. Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 27-28.

<sup>99</sup>See Layman, “A Moral Argument for the Existence of God,” 54-55, for the argument that the existence of God and post-mortem life are requisite for moral overridingness. Layman’s claim, however, is stronger than Hare’s in that Layman claims that even moral evaluations would be irrational without the existence of God.

<sup>100</sup>Hare, “Ethics and Religion,” 161.

## Human Autonomy

A major objection to Hare's argument has to do with an aspect of Kantian moral philosophy that Hare both accepts and defends, which is Kant's view of autonomy. For both Christian and secular critics of Kant, human autonomy is often the most specious part of Kant's view, and, as chapter 6 of this dissertation will indicate, a major aspect of MacIntyre's argument against Kant is his argument against Kantian autonomy. What worsens the problem for Hare is that Hare holds to a form of divine command theory, and most interpret Kant's argument against heteronomy toward the end of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*<sup>101</sup> as an argument against divine command theory.

Hare both recognizes this apparent problem and defends Kant's view against his detractors. His argument is that critics of Kantian autonomy largely misunderstand what Kantian autonomy is. This final section of this chapter analyzes some of the arguments against autonomy and Hare's response to them. Chapter 6 of this dissertation addresses MacIntyre's criticism of Kant.

### The Problem with Autonomy

For many philosophers, Kantian autonomy is incoherent or even immoral. According to contemporary critics of Kant, autonomy locates morality within the individual instead of subordinating an individual to the principles of morality. According to these critics, a morality in which the law (*nomos*) is within the self (*autos*) is not a version of morality in which someone must submit to those precepts. This criticism comes in at least two forms.<sup>102</sup> From a Christian standpoint, autonomy takes the role in morality that God should have. Colin Gunton, for instance, claims that

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<sup>101</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 108-11.

<sup>102</sup>A third type of criticism comes from presuppositional apologetics. For presuppositional apologists, however, autonomy is not simply a Kantian problem; autonomy is the central aspect of non-Christian thinking and living. Presuppositionalists, moreover, tend to accuse everyone who is not a presuppositionalist of adhering to autonomy regardless as to whether one is a Christian, atheist, or Muslim. See Greg L. Bahnsen, *Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended* (Powder Springs, GA: The

the creation of universal law was traditionally the function of God alone, and this function is now arrogated to the individual human rational will. In order to assure the autonomy of the human moral agent, Kant has denied the function traditionally ascribed to God. Lawmaking is now the work of the rational will, not of a being outside ourselves. We instruct ourselves rather than receive instructions. Thus the function of lawmaking is transferred from God to human reason. In a sense, Kant has made reason into God.<sup>103</sup>

Iris Murdoch provides an atheistic attack on Kantian autonomy. She claims that this concept is the antithesis of morality. In genuine morality, one encounters and adjusts to reality outside the self. The autonomous individual that one encounters in the work of Kant, however, finds morality within the self. Autonomy leads one to subordinate all external sources of morality to what reason uncovers within the self. According to Murdoch, this person “already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer.”<sup>104</sup>

### **Hare and Kantian Autonomy**

In light of the above criticisms, if Hare is to maintain Kantian autonomy, he needs to address whether Kantian autonomy is anti-Christian and whether Kantian autonomy diverts the individual from reality. Hare acknowledges the criticisms that Kantian autonomy is anti-Christian and anti-theistic. He also acknowledges that many take Kant’s argument against heteronomy toward the end of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* to be the decisive argument against divine command theory.<sup>105</sup> Hare claims, however, that the individual who alleges that Kant opposed Christianity

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American Vision, 2008), 91, and Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998), 1n2.

<sup>103</sup>Colin Gunton, *Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay towards a Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 61. For the same criticism, see Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 105.

<sup>104</sup>Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter Conradi (New York: Penguin, 1997), 364. For Murdoch, to be morally good is “to see and to respond to the real world in the light of a virtuous consciousness.” *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>105</sup>John E. Hare, *God’s Call: Moral Realism, God’s Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 89.

“falsifies”<sup>106</sup> Kant’s position. Kant, moreover, not only does not have a problem with divine command theory as such; Kant supports a type of divine command theory.

Hare first claims that one may interpret Kant in one of two ways. Hare takes what he calls the “constitutive”<sup>107</sup> position concerning Kantian autonomy. This view is that Kant promotes transcendental realism, which Hare defines as the view that “there is something beyond the limitations of our understanding. In particular, there is a God who is at the head of the kingdom of which we are members.”<sup>108</sup> The opposite interpretation is creative anti-realism, which is the assertion that no such being really exists. Hare cites Kant’s work in *Lectures on Ethics* for support for the transcendental realist interpretation. In this work, Kant alleges that God is not the writer of moral laws. He also notes, however, that

the moral laws can nevertheless be subject to a lawgiver. There can exist a being which has the power and authority to execute these laws, to declare that they are in accordance with his will, and to impose upon every one the obligation of acting in accordance with them. This being is therefore the lawgiver, though not the author of the laws. In the same way, God is in no sense the author of the fact that the triangle has three angles.<sup>109</sup>

According to Hare, therefore, Kant has no problem in claiming that God is the giver of moral laws. God places moral obligation on human beings, and the language that Kant uses bears no sign of being figurative or antirealist.

Hare notes that in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant claims that the will “is so subject [to the moral law] that it must be considered as also *making the law* for itself and precisely on this account as first of all subject to the law.”<sup>110</sup> The will

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<sup>106</sup>Hare, *God’s Call*, 88.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.* Italics in original.

<sup>109</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Louis Infield (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 51-52.

<sup>110</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 98-99. For Hare’s discussion, see Hare, *God’s Call*, 94.

must, therefore, write the laws of morality within the individual. Hare's interpretation of these two passages is that moral agents self-legislate through "recapitulating in our wills the declaration in God's will of our duties."<sup>111</sup> God creates the laws, and humans appropriate them through reason. Hare claims that in this interpretation, autonomy is a concept that is closer to submission than creation.<sup>112</sup> He then points to the strain in Kant's thinking that although knowledge of God is impossible, morality necessitates one to believe in God.<sup>113</sup> As Kant states, "Morality thus inevitably leads to religion, and through religion it extends itself to the idea of a mighty lawgiver outside the human being."<sup>114</sup>

These considerations lead Hare to conclude that Kant's argument against heteronomy is not an argument against divine command theory. Kant's positive language regarding the nature and being of God means that if Kant has any consistency, he does not make an argument against divine command theory as such. Hare attempts, therefore, to interpret Kant in light of the debates of Kant's own time period. He notes that in the time period between Leibniz and Kant, rationalists and pietists were engaged in continuous debate. According to Hare, two of the major figures in this debate were the rationalist Christian Wolff and pietist Christian August Crusius.<sup>115</sup> One of Kant's teachers, Martin Knutzen, had attempted to bring together aspects of rationalism and pietism, and Hare concludes that Kant was attempting to do what Knutzen tried to do. For rationalists like Wolff, perfection unified ethical concepts like virtue, happiness, duty, and natural law.<sup>116</sup> Crusius claimed that the conscience gives human beings access to the command of God apart from human reason.

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<sup>111</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 96. See also Hare, *God and Morality*, 268.

<sup>112</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 96.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>114</sup>Kant, *Reason and Rational Theology*, 59-60. See also Scruton, *Kant*, 97.

<sup>115</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 130.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, 130-31.

Kant explicitly argues against two principles of rational heteronomy. He first claims that perfection is a heteronomous principle that does not provide one with a foundation for morality.<sup>117</sup> The concept is essentially ambiguous, and all attempts to base morality on an idea of perfection lead to circular reasoning. This view corresponds to Wolff's position. The second view "derives morality from a divine and supremely perfect will."<sup>118</sup> This claim accords, Hare argues, with Crusius's attempt to derive part of morality from the natural inclination of humankind to acknowledge the will of God through conscience, and Kant is merely rejecting this view.<sup>119</sup> Hare then claims that he is able to combine Kantian autonomy with Scotist teleology:

We can then put this Kantian notion of autonomous submission together with Scotus's view of our final end. We can be autonomous if we trust God to tell us to do what will in the end produce the highest intrinsic good, namely (as Scotus puts it) that we become co-lovers with God. So we carry out our obligations because God has made them obligatory, but also because we share this end with God.<sup>120</sup>

### **The Problem with Hare's Interpretation**

Hare's treatment of Kant is problematic for a number of reasons. First, to claim, as Hare does, that writing a law for oneself is merely a form of submission stretches the bounds of the meaning of terms like *submission*. Second, in the passage upon which Hare relies for support, Kant explicitly claims that God is "not the author of the laws" just as God is "in no sense"<sup>121</sup> the author of the fact that triangles have three side. Hare, nonetheless, claims that God creates the moral law,<sup>122</sup> and he even calls his own view *theonomous*.<sup>123</sup> According to Hare, his view upholds both autonomy and theonomy. As in

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<sup>117</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 110.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 132.

<sup>120</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 118.

<sup>121</sup>Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 52.

<sup>122</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 96.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 114-15. He only means that God is central in understanding the law. He does not

the first problem, to claim that God has in no way written the moral law and yet he has created appears to create new meanings for terms like *author* and *create*.

A third problem is the relationship between reason and dignity in Kant's view. For Kant, the basis for morality in general and autonomy in particular lies in the rational nature of human beings: "every rational being, as an end in himself, must be able to regard himself as also the maker of universal law in respect of any law whatever to which he may be subjected."<sup>124</sup> Rationality, moreover, is what gives humans dignity.<sup>125</sup> Hare recognizes the importance of dignity and autonomy in Kantian thought. He notes that since humans have dignity, they deserve treatment as ends and not merely as means. What gives them dignity, furthermore, is that humans have autonomy, which means that they can adopt a law as if they wrote that particular law.<sup>126</sup>

What Hare neither recognizes nor accepts is that, according to Kant, reason is what gives humans dignity and autonomy. Reason is what one must use in determining what actions one must treat as if they were the command of God. Reason provides one with a way to determine which aspects of Christianity one should follow and which of those one should reject.<sup>127</sup> Reason does not function in such a way for Hare. He admits, "Our reason is defective, and we therefore need to think of a reflection-position better than our own."<sup>128</sup> Other aspects of human life are too powerful and sway human beings

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affirm the position of the relationship between God and politics known as theonomy.

<sup>124</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 105.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 105-6. Kant also bases the kingdom of ends on the rational nature of humanity.

<sup>126</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 150-51.

<sup>127</sup>In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant claims, "The God who speaks through our own (morally practical) reason is an infallible interpreter of His words in the Scriptures, whom everyone can understand. And it is quite impossible for there to be any other accredited interpreter of his words (one, for example, who would interpret them in a historical way); for religion is a purely rational affair." Kant, *Reason and Rational Theology*, 286-87.

<sup>128</sup>Hare, *Why Bother Being Good?*, 155. For his entire argument against reason, see *ibid.*, 154-72.

from the influence of reason too easily. One may doubt whether a view of autonomy is truly Kantian without reason as the basis for autonomy.

The conclusion one may make concerning Hare's view of autonomy is that Hare does not place autonomy where many place God. He is not, therefore, susceptible to the Christian criticisms of Kantian autonomy. Since Hare emphasizes the internalization of an external reality, he also is not susceptible to Murdoch's criticism of autonomy. Through emphasizing the theological references of Kant's work, Hare also strongly supports the transcendental realist interpretation of Kant. Hare claims that Kant really means *submission* when Kant writes *legislation*, and he alleges that one can create moral laws without authoring moral laws. His interpretation in these two areas is highly tenuous. Hare also doubts the sufficiency of reason where Kant affirms the sufficiency of reason. Kant claims that one must treat the moral obligations that one writes as if God commands them; Hare writes that one must treat the commands of God as if one has written them. From this analysis, Hare's view of autonomy may be tenable, but it is not Kantian.

### **Conclusion**

The most basic of Hare's premises for Christianity is that moral experience without the existence of God is not viable. This chapter has elucidated what Hare means by moral experience, which is that morality is universal, prescriptive, and overriding. The perspective, moreover, of morality is that of an ideal observer. This Kantian view of morality, moreover, requires the existence of the Christian God in order for morality to be a viable endeavor. Although Hare modifies Kant's view of autonomy, his premises are Kantian, and his argument is valid. The soundness of every argument, however, requires sound premises. The soundness of the first premise is a major topic for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### HARE AND ENLIGHTENMENT CRITIQUE

According to John Hare, if morality is viable, then Christianity must be true. The initial premise of Hare's argument is that moral experience entails a gap between moral norms and human capabilities. Hare argues that given these assumptions, Christianity must be true as long as morality is to be a viable enterprise. Central to Hare's argument is that, as the previous chapter demonstrated, moral experience is distinctively Kantian. From these Kantian premises, Hare argues for the truth of Christianity. Although Hare's view of autonomy is quasi-Kantian, concepts such as universality, prescriptivity, overridingness, and the ideal observer theory reveal the Kantian nature of his view.

The primary argument of Alasdair MacIntyre precludes the truth of Hare's initial premise. MacIntyre claims that one can structure moral philosophy according to one of three ways: that of the Enlightenment, Aristotle, or Nietzsche. MacIntyre then argues that the moral views of both Nietzsche and the Enlightenment thinkers are not tenable. Aristotelianism is the only method then available, and MacIntyre presents a contemporary and unique formulation of Aristotelianism. A major aspect of MacIntyre's critique of the Enlightenment is his critique of Kant, one of the Enlightenment's "most intellectually powerful protagonists."<sup>1</sup> The problem of Kantian philosophy, according to MacIntyre, is not simply that Kant set forth a problematic moral philosophy. Kant, his fellow proponents of the Enlightenment, and their philosophical descendants all fail in setting forth a cogent position, and their failure was and is a necessary failure.

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<sup>1</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 117.

MacIntyre's claim about the Enlightenment is important in evaluating Hare's position for two reasons. First, according to Hare, morality contains moral norms, human inability, and a hypothetical keeper of moral norms.<sup>2</sup> This tripartite nature of morality is not simply one strong view among many plausible options. This structure of morality is a vestige of what the Christian God has implanted within humanity: "we have in this three-part structure a survival of the belief in a perfect and infinite moral being, whom we imperfectly resemble, and who created us to resemble him more than we do."<sup>3</sup> Hare holds, therefore, that a Kantian structure of morality is an example of common grace. What MacIntyre calls a failure, therefore, is what Hare calls common grace.

The second reason that MacIntyre's claim about the Enlightenment is important is that MacIntyre's view reduces the seriousness of a revised version of Hare's view. For instance, one could take a softer interpretation of Hare. Perhaps Hare is mistaken about Kantian morality being a vestige of what God has implanted within human beings. If Hare is mistaken, perhaps one can still accept his argument as having a conditional conclusion. One could, therefore, modify Hare's primary thesis in the following way: if one accepts Kantian moral premises, then one needs to accept Christianity in order to have a viable morality.

Even if one takes this revised version of Hare's claim, then MacIntyre's argument still significantly reduces the significance of Hare's claim. MacIntyre argues that Kant's view is inherently incoherent. If the initial premises of MacIntyre's argument are true, then the protasis of the revised version of Hare's argument is similar to an argument that begins by stating, "If the phlogiston theory of gas is true . . ." Any argument that contains a premise discredited to the extent that MacIntyre claims is true of

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<sup>2</sup>John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 24. Hare implies at first that this view of morality is a relic of a predominately Christian culture, but in note 28, he claims that this view actually predates Christianity.

Kant is a largely irrelevant argument even if the argument is valid. One cannot, therefore, hold to the type of Aristotelianism that MacIntyre sets forth and the prescriptive realism that Hare puts forward. The moral philosophies are mutually incompatible.

### **An Initial Objection**

Before proceeding to MacIntyre's criticisms of Kant, one may make an initial objection that MacIntyre unduly limits the options of the moral positions available. The first premise of MacIntyre's primary argument is that only Aristotelian, Enlightenment, and Nietzschean moralities are contemporary options. An objection to this premise may take one of two forms. First, an objector may note that MacIntyre excludes without any argument theological positions such as Carl F. H. Henry's revelational ethic or John Milbank's radical orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> The claim of each of these authors is that moral philosophies that do not presuppose the truth of Christianity fail. A second form of this objection may come from a secularist. This claim is that MacIntyre's categories exclude secular philosophies like Platonism, utilitarianism, or prescriptivism.

In response to the first objection, one may note that the first chapter of this dissertation defined moral philosophy in such a way that the claims of moral philosophy do not presuppose the truth of Christianity. Henry's revelational ethic and Milbank's radical orthodoxy, then, are not options for someone who accepts this view of moral philosophy. Perhaps Henry is correct that all attempts to formulate even a rudimentary morality apart from Christianity fail, or perhaps Milbank is correct that proceeding

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<sup>4</sup>What makes this objection even more relevant is that the work of each author parallels MacIntyre's own argument against the Enlightenment; they simply extend their criticisms to all moral viewpoints that do not begin with their theological premises. Henry's work in ethics, of course, predates MacIntyre's most significant work, but Milbank admits that the reader of his own work could see him as making "a temeritous attempt to radicalize the thought of MacIntyre." John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 327. For Henry's criticisms of a plethora of secular moral philosophies, see Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 21-142.

without theological assumptions is impossible. Nonetheless, to defend such a view of moral philosophy against these claims is outside the scope of this dissertation.

Two points relate to the second form of this objection. First, MacIntyre claims that moral positions such as utilitarianism and prescriptivism follow the tradition of the Enlightenment and are, therefore, subject to the same criticisms.<sup>5</sup> Second, as chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation pointed out, MacIntyre's definition of Aristotelianism is broader than a simple reliance on the texts of Aristotle. MacIntyre often refers to the view that he is defending as the "classical tradition."<sup>6</sup> As chapter 2 showed, he claims that a teleological view of humanity predates Aristotle. For MacIntyre, Aristotle provides the best philosophical articulation of a moral framework that includes Plato and Jane Austen.<sup>7</sup> To anticipate a point made below, a key aspect of the argument he makes against Enlightenment moral frameworks is that these frameworks separate morality from social structures and historical realities. To use a term that the previous chapter of this dissertation utilized in a slightly different way, these types of morality are autonomous. The locus of the moral law (*nomos*) is within the self (*autos*), and the self is clearly distinct from historical predecessors and social obligations.

Although this chapter retains the terms from chapters 1 and 5 for the sake of clarity and convenience, the terms are not as important as what the terms describe. One may restate the premises of MacIntyre's primary argument without changing the content of his argument or the argument of this chapter:

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<sup>5</sup>For MacIntyre's criticism of utilitarianism, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 62-65. For his criticism of prescriptivism, see *ibid.*, 111-13.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 59, 237.

<sup>7</sup>For MacIntyre's discussion about the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 69-102. For his treatment of Austen, see MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 185-86, 239-43. He calls Austen, "the last great representative of the classical tradition of the virtues." *Ibid.*, 243.

1. Three broad models of morality are available: classically traditional, autonomous, and genealogical.<sup>8</sup>
2. Autonomous models are not sound.
3. Genealogical models are not sound.
4. Therefore, a classically traditional model is the most plausible model of morality.

One can also call MacIntyre's view a classical tradition of morality, for which Aristotle provides the best formulation.

### **MacIntyre versus the Enlightenment**

In order to understand the charges that MacIntyre makes against Kant and whether Hare's appropriation of Kant can withstand these criticisms, one must understand those criticisms within the context of MacIntyre's critique of the Enlightenment. Many years before becoming an Aristotelian, MacIntyre claimed that modern views of morality lacked objectivity. After the violence of Stalin became public in England, many individuals abandoned Marxism for a modern view of morality. MacIntyre's response to them prefigures his later criticism of the Enlightenment: "They repudiate Stalinist crimes in the name of moral principle; but the fragility of their appeal to moral principle lies in the apparently arbitrary nature of that appeal. Whence come these standards by which Stalinism is judged and found wanting and why should they have authority over us?"<sup>9</sup> By neglecting the relevance of history, social structures, and human psychology, Enlightenment thinkers and their philosophical descendants rendered moral terms arbitrary, and MacIntyre's former Marxist colleagues were embracing subjectivism.

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<sup>8</sup>MacIntyre calls Nietzsche's project the genealogical project. He claims that Foucault unsuccessfully attempted to continue this project. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 49-55.

<sup>9</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 32.

MacIntyre's more developed argument against Enlightenment ways of moral thinking comes in *After Virtue*.<sup>10</sup> MacIntyre names Kant as one philosopher among four who formulated inherently incoherent systems. The other philosophers are David Hume, Denis Diderot, and Søren Kierkegaard. These thinkers failed, according to MacIntyre, because the assumptions that they shared were false. The purpose of this section is to point out three specific criticisms that MacIntyre makes concerning the Enlightenment and to see if Hare's Kantian premises can withstand these criticisms.

### **Roles versus Individual**

According to MacIntyre, one of the most significant differences between an Aristotelian framework and an Enlightenment framework is the different conceptions of the individual. Within MacIntyre's Aristotelian framework, the concept of the self and social roles are inextricable. To understand oneself apart from roles such as a son, a fisherman, a poet, or a citizen is impossible because those roles are part of the self. In the traditional view, these roles "are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover 'the real me'. They are part of my substance, defining partially at least and sometimes wholly my obligations and my duties."<sup>11</sup> The importance of roles is one of the ways in which MacIntyre includes both Homer and Jane Austen in his Aristotelianism.<sup>12</sup> In Homeric society, for example, the word *good* refers to how people perform their social roles and how non-human entities are conducive of their intended ends.<sup>13</sup> One cannot be a good person without being good

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<sup>10</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 36-78.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>12</sup>For his interpretation of Homer, MacIntyre relies on A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960). MacIntyre claims that in Jane Austen's novels, the morality of the characters and their roles are inextricable. This relationship is especially evident in *Mansfield Park*. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 94.

<sup>13</sup>MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 89-90.

at one's roles. Although MacIntyre claims that Aristotle transcends the heroic tradition, neither Aristotle nor his most cogent defenders reject the importance of the role within the self.

In contrast to Aristotelianism, proponents of an Enlightenment framework attempt to divorce the self, according to MacIntyre, from societal roles. A woman, in this view, understands herself as essentially separate from her roles as a sister, daughter, apartment resident, or lawyer.<sup>14</sup> Within this view, a question like the one Aristotle raises concerning whether being a good citizen is the same as being a good person never arises.<sup>15</sup> The self is totally conceptually detached from the political environment. The isolated individual in this view is the most important moral unit.<sup>16</sup> MacIntyre claims that in the transition from the Aristotelian way of thinking about roles to a modern way of think about roles, the "traditional roles no longer exist and the consequent evaluative criteria are no longer used, but the evaluative words survive."<sup>17</sup> In other words, words like *good*, *bad*, and *virtuous* remain while the roles that made sense of those words do not. In this environment, evaluative language then indicates that a person is simply stating "tastes, preferences, and choices."<sup>18</sup> When moral language becomes a matter of tastes, MacIntyre claims, then morality becomes essentially arbitrary.

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<sup>14</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 35. If one views gender as a social construct, then one must view the self apart from gender as well. Although eradicating gender from the above sentence garbles the language, one could restate the sentence in the following way: "A woman views that woman's self as essentially separate from the self's socially established role as a woman."

<sup>15</sup>Aristotle, *Politica* 1276b16-1277b33. Although Aristotle concludes that to be a good citizen is not the same as being a good person, the two concepts are closely related. MacIntyre comments that for Aristotle, the basic moral unit was the individual as a citizen. One did not reason morally outside the context of the πόλις. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 339.

<sup>16</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 210.

<sup>17</sup>MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 92.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

**Kant and social roles.** As an Enlightenment thinker, Kant is an example of one who separates roles from the self. Moral philosophy is by definition devoid of all empirical reference.<sup>19</sup> Moral obligation, therefore, cannot depend in any way on social roles. In one of his arguments against Kant, MacIntyre gives two scenarios that demonstrate the integral nature of social roles in moral action.<sup>20</sup> First, a Dutch mother lied to Nazis about the Jewish identity of a neighbor's child. Second, a mother from Massachusetts killed an attacker whom she believed threatened the life of her infant child. In Kant's view, any moral justification for the devotion of the Dutch mother to her Jewish neighbor's child or the devotion of the mother in Massachusetts to her own child must arise from the rational nature of the children they were protecting: "*Rational nature exists as an end in itself.*"<sup>21</sup> On that basis, Kant gives the formula of the end in itself that the previous chapter of this dissertation discussed. Kant claims, moreover, that in situations where one lies without actually wronging a person,

I formally but not materially violate the principle of right with respect to all unavoidably necessary utterances. And this is much worse than to do injustice to any particular person, because such a deed against an individual does not always presuppose the existence of a principle in the subject which produces such an act.<sup>22</sup>

MacIntyre condemns neither woman, and he claims that what differentiates his Aristotelian position from Kant's view is where each begins moral inquiry. Whereas Kant would think of each individual's moral obligations arising out of the fact that each is a rational agent, MacIntyre claims that the moral obligations arise from the social role that each has. The first woman's moral obligation came from her social role *in loco parentis*,

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<sup>19</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (1956; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 57.

<sup>20</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Selected Essays*, vol. 2, *Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006), 135.

<sup>21</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 96. Italics in original.

<sup>22</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), 350. This quote comes from Kant's essay, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives." For the whole essay, see *ibid.*, 346-50.

and the second woman's moral obligation arose as a mother. MacIntyre contrasts the initial starting point of Kantianism and his own position: "Instead of first asking 'By what principles am I, as a rational person, bound?' we have first to task 'By what principles are we, as actually or potentially rational persons, bound in our relationships?'"<sup>23</sup> In other words, Kant begins with rationality, and MacIntyre begins with social roles.

A major problem with Kant's view, according to MacIntyre, is that Kant's moral viewpoint does not reflect the fact that the exercise of rationality depends in large part on healthy social relationships. Without social practices such as motherhood, schools, and police forces, to question whether or not one is treating others merely as means is not possible.<sup>24</sup> To act as the bearer of a role is, therefore, a more fundamental category than acting as a rational moral agent.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the universality of moral judgments depends on the particularity of social roles.

**Universality and roles.** As the previous chapter noted, universality is an essential aspect of Hare's moral philosophy. Like Kant, the categorical imperative is important aspect of the moral demand.<sup>26</sup> Universality is what makes a moral judgment moral and not simply prudential or emotional. One would expect that Hare does not recognize moral duties arising from social roles or particular obligations. R. M. Hare attempts to reduce relationships to universal terms: "If mothers had the propensity to care

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<sup>23</sup>MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics*, 135-36.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>One can see the problems with Kant's position in that, as Roger Scruton notes, Kant's own rationality and intellectual development arose in large part because of his social environment. Scruton notes that to the pietist school in Königsberg, "Kant, whose talents had been recognized by a wise and benevolent pastor, was sent at the age of 8. It is fortunate for posterity that such an education should have been offered to one of Kant's lowly origins." Roger Scruton, *Kant: A Very Short Introduction*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-2. Scruton, however, does not make the overall point that I am making about the priority of social roles.

<sup>26</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 8-15.

equally for all the children in the world, it is unlikely that children would be as well provided for even as they are.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the fact that Hare could attempt to defend universality by categorizing the relevant social roles into universal terms, Hare also defends universalizability, which allows him to defend his view in a way that an orthodox Kantian could not. MacIntyre’s criticism of Kant is that Kant bases his view of moral obligation on human rationality, which ignores the priority that relationships have in exercising that rationality. For Hare, universalizability is more important. To refer to the illustrations above concerning the two mothers, Hare could simply say that being a mother or surrogate mother is a universalizable role.

Against both Kant and R. M. Hare, Hare admits that social roles do involve particular obligations. Kant’s denial of particular obligations is problematic. For instance, the greatest commandment is not universal: “The command is not prescribing that the believer should love anyone who is the same as God in universally specifiable respects.”<sup>28</sup> Hare, moreover, claims that if one justifies a moral judgment on universal grounds alone, situations arise when one must sacrifice the well-being of one’s own children for other children. If one has an opportunity to take a job for a charity, which will result in benefit an incalculable number of children while one’s own children experience lifelong negative consequence, certain situations require one to take the job. To use R. M. Hare’s classification, these judgments occur at the critical level, which means that they are overriding.<sup>29</sup>

Where Hare and MacIntyre still disagree is in the way that Hare rejects the logical connection between social roles and moral obligations. In other words, although

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<sup>27</sup>R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 137. Cf. Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 156.

<sup>28</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 153. See Matt 22:36-40.

<sup>29</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 157.

particular obligations occur within social roles, they do not exist because of social roles. Hare claims that to believe that particular obligations arise because of the social role denigrates the recipient of those obligations. He gives the relationship between a parent and a child as an example. If a parent loves the child simply because the child is the child of that parent, the parent does not love the child as a person: “Perhaps I give up my Friday evening to go to my daughter’s student recital. To say that I do this because she is my child is to impoverish, even to demean what I do.”<sup>30</sup> Although Hare does not explicitly refer to MacIntyre at this point, Hare is claiming that MacIntyre’s view devalues the two children in the illustrations given above. In the illustrations, the mother and the surrogate mother did not care for the children as individuals; they only acted as they did for the children because of the relationship that those children have with those two women.

Hare admits that particular obligations simply do not fit with his view of universality. The particular obligations exist, but he cannot justify them on the universalist grounds that he justifies other obligations: “I do not know of any non-question-begging way to rule out particular moral thinking from being properly described as *moral*.”<sup>31</sup> Any way, in other words, that Hare uses to justify the obligations that a mother has toward her children already assumes that a mother has those obligations. His criterion of universality is insufficient. In the examples that MacIntyre gives against Kant, Hare would claim that MacIntyre’s position demeans the value of the child. He, however, gives no reason why appealing to social roles reduces the dignity of the child, and he admits that his own position cannot fully account for the particular obligations.

Hare’s problem arises because he is not including social roles within the identity of each individual. Appealing to social roles can only denigrate the dignity of an

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<sup>30</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 155.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 159. Italics in the original.

individual if those social roles are not part of that individual. In his later works, Hare attempts to solve this problem by utilizing the Scotist concept of haecceity. According to this concept, each individual has a single, inscrutable essence.<sup>32</sup> In loving one's neighbor, one loves the neighbor not as a neighbor, but as an individual with an individual essence. For Hare, "Our treatment of each neighbor should therefore reflect this love of the different and unique kinds of actual and potential God-loving, to the extent that we can know them."<sup>33</sup> Although many moral obligations to each neighbor remain constant because of the common human nature in each person, certain obligations vary because of the particularity or haecceity of each self.

The problem with this view is that Hare is simply attempting to explain a problem by adding an inexplicable concept. In Hare's view, the self is simply an undefinable essence. The individual essence that each person has is inscrutable and distinct from any social roles that one has. His view of haecceity is simply an *ad hoc* ontological concept that he uses to rectify the problems that his Kantianism creates. Without Kantian universality, however, no problem exists for this concept to rectify.

MacIntyre, on the other hand, is able to give distinguishing properties for each individual. In his view, each individual stands in unique relationships with other individuals who also stand in unique relationships with others. Concerning the individual, MacIntyre's arguments against Kant reduce the plausibility of Hare's position. Hare's Kantianism thus requires what Ron Highfield calls "the empty self."<sup>34</sup> By removing

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<sup>32</sup>John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 112. Hare finds scriptural support for this belief in Rev 2:17 in that Christ will give each believer a new name on a white stone. *Ibid.*, 113. The problem is that even if Hare is correct that the new name is a personal, unique essence apart from any social role, then Christ gives that essence in the future and not the present. Additionally, Hare needs to specify to what Christ will give the essence. If the individual does not already have the essence, then the individual is not yet a unique essence.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>34</sup>Ron Highfield *God, Freedom, and Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 100.

essential aspects of the self, the proponent of universal morality loses his or her primary moral unit: “The self is *empty* because it defines itself apart from its relationships with others.”<sup>35</sup> The stronger position is that social roles have an inextricable connection with moral responsibilities because they in part define the self. When one juxtaposes Hare’s empty self with MacIntyre’s “conception of persons-in-social-relationship as the fundamental units of moral life,”<sup>36</sup> MacIntyre’s premise that an Enlightenment model of morality is unviable is stronger than Hare’s premise that moral experience leads us to postulate a moral gap.

### **Tradition versus Universality**

A second major criticism that MacIntyre makes against an Enlightenment moral framework has to do with the concept of tradition. MacIntyre attempts to demonstrate that the concept of tradition is inescapable. He claims that all systematic thinkers must begin with some sort of set of assumptions and practices, which form a tradition. To deny the necessity of presuppositions is, therefore, incoherent. MacIntyre alleges that Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant deny what they must accept.

**The encyclopaedic tradition.** This argument is clearest in MacIntyre’s criticism of what he calls the “encyclopaedic”<sup>37</sup> tradition. This term is ironic in the sense that those who constitute the tradition deny the importance of tradition in philosophy. A primary example of this view point is, according to MacIntyre, Adam Gifford. Gifford and his fellow educated Scottish thinkers inherited from Enlightenment thinkers the assumptions that all reality is ultimately intelligible and that the canons of rationality are indisputable. Educated persons, moreover, agree on what makes something true.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Highfield, *God, Freedom, and Human Dignity*, 100. Italics in original.

<sup>36</sup>MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics*, 140.

<sup>37</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 171.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

MacIntyre calls this view the encyclopaedic tradition because of the importance of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in Gifford's time. For the editors of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the work of synthesizing facts belongs to philosophy, and the task of the moral philosopher, therefore, is to synthesize the moral facts.<sup>39</sup>

MacIntyre's criticism of the encyclopaedic view parallels Thomas Kuhn's criticism of the dominant view of earlier philosophers of science.<sup>40</sup> The writers of the articles in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* fail to recognize the importance of history and presuppositions. The presuppositions that arise from one's historical setting determine what one thinks is relevant. After explaining the Kuhnian criticism of Hempelian philosophy of science, MacIntyre notes, "What are taken to be the relevant data and how they are identified, characterized, and classified will depend upon who is performing these tasks and what his or her theological and moral standpoint and perspective is."<sup>41</sup> Proponents of the encyclopaedic position allege that all knowledge proceeds the way science proceeds. Misunderstanding the true nature of science leads to a misunderstanding of the true nature of morality. Gifford was unknowingly making judgments from a *Weltanschauung* or tradition.<sup>42</sup>

Although his focus in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* is the encyclopaedic view, he merely cites them as one example of an Enlightenment framework. MacIntyre makes three arguments against the Enlightenment rejection of tradition.<sup>43</sup> First, a rejection of tradition means that one is unable to choose which moral

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<sup>39</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 23.

<sup>40</sup>MacIntyre acknowledges his debt to Kuhn. See *ibid.*, 17.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.* In his discussion of debates between adherents of different scientific paradigms, Kuhn asks, "since no paradigm ever solves all the problems it defines and since no two paradigms leave all the same problems unsolved, paradigm debates always involve the question: Which problems is it more significant to have solved?" Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 110. See also Del Ratzsch, *Science & Its Limits: The Natural Sciences in Christian Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 46-48.

<sup>42</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 32.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-24.

criteria are relevant for making moral judgments. This argument is the corollary truth to the point MacIntyre makes regarding the importance of presuppositions. If one rejects any prior framework, then one cannot determine what is relevant in elucidating moral criteria. Moral philosophers offer various criteria: universalizability, intuitions, utility, or duty. One cannot choose one criterion without some sort of presuppositions or preexisting framework. Without a method to choose between criteria, the choice between criteria becomes arbitrary.

The second argument is that without a tradition, the existence of moral reality is dubitable. In the same way that philosophers of science came to doubt and disagree of the nature of the external world or the existence of an orderly *cosmos*, disagreement over moral criteria leads one to doubt whether objective moral facts exist. According to MacIntyre, the Nietzschean position is the result of the Enlightenment thinkers' rejection of tradition. Third, one cannot understand the concept of progress without having a framework in which proponents of a view explain problems with hypotheses that are more fruitful and contain fewer anomalies. Moral philosophy also requires a framework, the proponents of which provide better explanations of moral disagreements and concepts. Moral philosophy that arose from the Enlightenment does not, therefore, allow moral philosophers to progress.

**Kant, Hare, and tradition.** In light of MacIntyre's criticisms of Gifford, the question arises as to whether Kant and Hare also reject the concept of tradition. Kant explicitly rejects tradition in his essay, "What Is the Enlightenment?"<sup>44</sup> Reason is the primary criterion of all thought, and Kantian reason does not depend on tradition or presuppositions. Kant locates reason within the self as the motto of the Enlightenment

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<sup>44</sup>See Immanuel Kant, "What Is the Enlightenment?," in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 286-92.

illustrates: “Have courage to use your own reason!”<sup>45</sup> Following this injunction requires that an individual follow reason before accepting any legal, political, or religious authorities.<sup>46</sup> Attaching oneself to a tradition ensures that one remains under what Kant calls, “self-incurred tutelage.”<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to Kant, Hare appears to accept the concept of tradition in two ways. First, he calls himself a “traditional Christian”<sup>48</sup> and refers to Christianity as his “religious tradition.”<sup>49</sup> This way of referring to tradition, however, is not the way MacIntyre utilizes tradition. Hare is arguing toward the Christian tradition and not from the Christian tradition. For MacIntyre, reason depends on tradition.<sup>50</sup> The concept of tradition, therefore, is functioning differently in Hare’s moral philosophy than in MacIntyre’s philosophy.

A second way in which Hare appears to accept the concept of tradition is the way Hare responds to MacIntyre’s criticism of R. M. Hare. MacIntyre accuses R. M. Hare of having an arbitrary moral philosophy. Universalizability is one of R. M. Hare’s fundamental concepts of morality, and MacIntyre claims that R. M. Hare provides no compelling reason why others should accept universalizability as a moral criterion. One must simply choose. MacIntyre claims that in prescriptivism,

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<sup>45</sup>Kant, “What Is the Enlightenment?,” 286. Kant then famously quotes Horace’s quip, “*sapere aude*.” The note erroneously claims that the saying is from Horace’s work, *Ars Poetica*. See Horace, *Epistularum* 1, 2, 40. The irony in this quote is that Horace is exhorting Lollius Maximus to read Homer’s works in order to become a more virtuous person. One could argue that Horace is closer to holding MacIntyre’s view of tradition than Kant’s view of wisdom. Of course, the fact that Kant quotes Horace does not mean that he approves Horace’s point.

<sup>46</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 287.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>48</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 1. Hare does not, however, define this phrase.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>50</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 321. This statement does not mean that proponents of different traditions share no common ground. MacIntyre simply means that the criteria for judging the truth or falsehood of a moral claim largely rely on presuppositions.

Each individual implicitly or explicitly has to adopt his or her own first principles on the basis of such a choice. The utterance of any universal principle is in the end an expression of the preferences of an individual will and for that will its principles have and can have only such authority as it chooses to confer upon them by adopting them. Thus emotivism has not been left very far behind at all.<sup>51</sup>

As chapter 5 of this dissertation demonstrated, Hare accepts universalizability, and this concept comes from Kant through R. M. Hare. An attack on universalizability in R. M. Hare's work is, therefore, an attack on Hare's own view. Hare responds to MacIntyre by claiming that the concept of universalizability functions in the same way in his own view as tradition functions in MacIntyre's position. Acceptance of universalizability is arbitrary, but this acceptance is not "arbitrary in the pejorative sense."<sup>52</sup> Universalizability is only arbitrary in the sense that any ultimate concept is arbitrary.<sup>53</sup> The primary basis for a moral judgment is ultimately a decision, and "a decision of principle"<sup>54</sup> is not arbitrary in an epistemologically vicious way. The ultimate basis for any moral viewpoint is a "way of life,"<sup>55</sup> and all that one can do is to describe that way of life.

Each philosopher is looking for ways to incorporate objectivity into his system. R. M. Hare and Hare are doing so on Kantian grounds, and MacIntyre is doing so on Aristotelian grounds. The problem with Hare's position is that Hare incorrectly interprets the way the concept of tradition functions for MacIntyre. This problem is twofold. First, if one accepts R. M. Hare's view, then one loses Kant's reason for accepting the categorical imperative. The purpose of the categorical imperative, according to Kant, is to

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<sup>51</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 20-21. For the role of preferences within R. M. Hare's view, see R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 94-106.

<sup>52</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 20.

<sup>53</sup>Hare explicitly connects his own defense of universalizability with his defense of Kant at this point. He summarizes MacIntyre's criticism of R. M. Hare as "the final result of the failure of the Enlightenment project undertaken by Kant." Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Hare, *God and Morality*, 214.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

have an imperative that has no condition.<sup>56</sup> All rational humans must accept this imperative to be rational. If R. M. Hare's decision is ultimately a choice, then choice is the condition that the moral foundation upon which Hare's philosophy rests. The categorical imperative is thus no longer categorical. Making the problem even more difficult is the fact that R. M. Hare is not a moral realist.<sup>57</sup> R. M. Hare defines objectivity as simply impartiality.<sup>58</sup> The reason that Kant gives for being moral is that one's rational nature compels one to be moral.

The second aspect of Hare's misinterpretation is that Hare interprets MacIntyre's view of tradition as a set of foundational premises. The way that the choice of universalizability functions for Hare is similar to the way axioms function in foundationalism. When one traces the rational validity of moral injunctions, then those premises lead to the criterion of universalizability. MacIntyre's view of tradition is closer to a *Weltanschauung*. The collection of moral propositions for MacIntyre is more like the web of a spider. The propositions connect in various ways. Following Aristotle, MacIntyre does claim that one can trace every moral action to the initial premise regarding one's τέλος, which is εὐδαιμονία.<sup>59</sup> The view of one's τέλος in part depends on one's community and moral education, but those aspects depend in part on one's view of the τέλος. In other words, these concepts are interdependent. In the words of David Naugle, MacIntyre's view means that "the character and content of rationality are *Weltanschauung*-dependent."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 99.

<sup>57</sup>For Hare's analysis of R. M. Hare's expressivism, see Hare, *God's Call*, 7-11.

<sup>58</sup>For R. M. Hare, moral objectivity "has nothing essentially to do with factuality." Objective moral judgments simply "have to be made from an impersonal standpoint." R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking*, 211.

<sup>59</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 135. He claims that a person can only know the nature of εὐδαιμονία by being a virtuous person. *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>60</sup>David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 309.

The previous subsection of this chapter summarized three objections that MacIntyre gives against the encyclopaedic view of morality in particular and any Enlightenment framework in general. Ignoring tradition (1) results in interminability in moral debates, (2) produces grounds for rejecting moral reality, and (3) removes grounds for making progress in a moral position. Hare escapes the third objection in that he does appear to build on R. M. Hare's view, and R. M. Hare attempts to refine Kant's position. They are clearly attempting to overcome the problems in the views of their predecessors.

While Hare is not susceptible to MacIntyre's third criticism, the first two objections are problems for Hare. Since Hare admits the arbitrary nature of his starting point, he is unable to provide positive arguments for accepting this view. Because of this importance, moreover, of universality within Hare's view, this problem is particularly difficult for him. The four ways in which Hare is Kantian are his universality, overridingness, prescriptivism, and ideal observer theory. The three latter concepts are dependent on the initial concept. For instance, if a moral judgment is not universal, then the judgment is not overriding. The judgment, moreover, loses force as a prescription or imperative, and ideal observer theory simply specifies the best logically possible perspective for a moral agent to take. Universalizability is the type of universality that Hare accepts, and if universalizability is an arbitrary principle, then the other three concepts are also arbitrary.

The second objection that MacIntyre makes against the encyclopaedic view illustrates the problem with Hare's response to the charge of adhering to an arbitrary moral philosophy. MacIntyre claims that apart from tradition, one is unable to have confidence that moral reality exists at all. In other words, subjectivism follows. Hare has to explain why so few individuals are Kantians. To illustrate this point in a way that MacIntyre does not, if everyone disagrees on the criteria for believing that aliens exist, then no one can be certain that they do exist even if a claim meets criteria. Everyone's criteria differs from everyone else's criteria.

In conclusion, in defending his own position against MacIntyre, Hare rejects the reason that Kant gives for the categorical imperative. Hare also makes the foundation of morality arbitrary in a way that MacIntyre does not. These problems result from Hare's Kantian premises. In comparing MacIntyre's view of tradition with Hare's view of universality, MacIntyre's premise concerning an Enlightenment framework is stronger than Hare's premise concerning moral experience.

### **Empty Formalism**

MacIntyre's most explicit criticism of Kant has to do with the categorical imperative. MacIntyre follows Hegel in claiming that the categorical imperative provides no substantive content to morality. Hegel separates the study of morality from the study of ethics. He claims that Kant correctly articulates the nature of morality, but without ethics, the categorical imperative is "empty formalism."<sup>61</sup> In the categorical imperative, one has the form of moral injunctions, but the form of morality without the content of ethics leaves moral agents directionless. One needs to examine the historical progression and social realities, which Hegel supplies. In the transition from morality to ethics, Hegel discusses the family, childrearing, and the state.<sup>62</sup> Unlike Kant, Hegel does not attempt to deduce particular obligations from universal obligations.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre is less sympathetic to Kant than Hegel is. For MacIntyre, the categorical imperative not only does not provide concrete moral guidance; the categorical imperative justifies trivial maxims: "Always eat mussels on Mondays in March."<sup>63</sup> In some cases, one may even justify immoral maxims: "Persecute all those

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<sup>61</sup>Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right; The Philosophy of History*, trans. T. M. Knox (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 47. Carl Henry makes this same criticism of Kant. See Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 112-13.

<sup>62</sup>Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right; The Philosophy of History*, 55-114.

<sup>63</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 46.

who hold false religious beliefs.”<sup>64</sup> Empty formalism, according to MacIntyre, is an example of both Kant’s desire and failure to find a rational, universal basis for morality.

If this criticism were sound, then the first premise of Hare’s argument would have another problem. Hare, however, provides an explicit response to MacIntyre. He replies that one needs to interpret the categorical imperative in light of what Kant states in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. In this later work, Kant affirms the use of ends in moral reasoning.<sup>65</sup> The two ends in particular that Kant affirms are the happiness of others and one’s own moral perfection, part of which is the use of reason.<sup>66</sup> According to Hare, these ends supply the content so that the form is no longer empty.

In his later treatment of Kant, MacIntyre partially recants his earlier criticism. He admits that the categorical imperative does not allow one to justify a number of universal imperatives because one as to act as a rational agent in formulating the maxims.<sup>67</sup> The perfection of oneself and the happiness of others do not allow one to enjoin the maxim to eat mussels every Monday in March or to persecute everyone who has wrong religious beliefs. MacIntyre, nonetheless, claims that the problem with Kant’s formalism is still that one cannot deduce any substantive moral injunctions from Kant’s claims.<sup>68</sup> The problem of empty formalism is that Kant separates all empirical reality from moral injunctions.

### **The Opposite of Kant**

The problem with Kant’s empty formalism is what remains after one’s moral basis is devoid of all empirical reference. Through emphasizing the form and neglecting

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<sup>64</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 47.

<sup>65</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 9-10n5.

<sup>66</sup>Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, 356.

<sup>67</sup>MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics*, 125.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

all empirical factors, Kant relegates morality into an entirely different realm.<sup>69</sup> MacIntyre appeals to Nietzsche's criticisms of Kant in *The Gay Science*. MacIntyre alleges that in section 335, Nietzsche "disposes of both what I have called the Enlightenment project to discover rational foundations for an objective morality and of the confidence of the everyday moral agent in post-Enlightenment culture that his moral practice and utterance are in good order."<sup>70</sup> On the one hand, the success of Nietzsche's arguments against Hare would strengthen MacIntyre's argument. On the other hand, if Hare's version of Kantianism withstands Nietzsche's arguments, then MacIntyre's empty formalism objection is itself empty.

As chapter 5 of this dissertation demonstrated, moral experience, for Hare, is universal, prescriptive, and overriding. None of these elements are empirical. The core of Nietzsche's criticism of Kant is that because Kant attempts to eradicate the empirical from claims of human normative action, Kant's moral theory is egregiously incorrect.<sup>71</sup> If morality is universal, prescriptive, and overriding as Hare claims, then the one who rejects morality should have overriding reasons to accept moral claims. The criticism is that by making morality wholly non-empirical, the proponent of Kantian morality has no rational basis upon which to persuade others to accept morality. To restate this point, one is not able to convince the nihilist or the free-rider to accept the claims of morality.

Nietzsche represents the view of the nihilist or free-rider. He is what C. J. Murdoch calls, "Kant's antipode."<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche exalts what Kant denigrates. One might call the hero of Nietzsche's theory, "the intractable egoist." One way to frame these

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<sup>69</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 39.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>71</sup>In interpreting Nietzsche, one has to refer to "normative action" rather than "moral action" because Nietzsche rejects morality as normative.

<sup>72</sup>C. J. Murdoch, "Kant's Antipode: Nietzsche's Transvaluation of Human Dignity and Its 'Implications' for Biotechnology Policy," *Health Law Review* 15 (2007): 24-26. See also Highfield, *God, Freedom, and Human Dignity*, 191, for this juxtaposition.

arguments is to ask the following question: Can Hare rationally vindicate Kantian moral experience against the rejection of the intractable egoist? If Hare provides reasons why the intractable egoist, as a member of the kingdom ends, should accept the universal, overriding claims of morality, then he is not susceptible to MacIntyre's empty-formalism criticism.

### **Hare and the Intractable Egoist**

In section 335 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche provides rough outlines for two arguments against "the old Kant"<sup>73</sup> that are relevant to Hare's Kantianism. In the first argument, Nietzsche claims that the Kantian is ignorant of his or her motive for considering morality. Many reasons can urge a person to listen to the claims of morality: "You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who hears his officer's command. Or like a woman who loves the man who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him."<sup>74</sup> Nietzsche claims that unless the Kantian knows that his or her own reasons for accepting Kantianism were moral, then the intractable egoist does not have a sufficient reason for accepting Kantianism. The argument, therefore, is as follows:

1. If the Kantian accepts a morality that is universal and overriding, then Kantian must have accepted morality because of moral reasons.
2. If the Kantian is to give the intractable egoist a reason for accepting morality, then the Kantian must have accepted morality because of moral reasons.
3. The Kantian cannot know the reasons he or she accepts morality.
4. The Kantian cannot know whether or not he or she truly accepts a morality that is universal and overriding.

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<sup>73</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 263-66. Two caveats are necessary. First, although Nietzsche does single out Kant, Nietzsche directs these arguments toward any who affirm morality. Second, Nietzsche actually provides outlines for three arguments, but Hare is not susceptible to one of the arguments.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 264.

5. The Kantian cannot give the intractable egoist a reason that the intractable egoist should accept morality.

In support of the first premise is the fact that if a moral position is universal, then one can accept a moral perspective for either moral or immoral reasons. The reasons that one accepts that perspective must be moral; otherwise, the moral position would not be universal and overriding. In support of the second premise is the fact that the Kantian cannot appeal to the intractable egoist to do what the Kantian has not done. The quote above is Nietzsche's statement of the third premise.<sup>75</sup>

Two points provide considerable support for the second premise. First, desire does matter to the Kantian, but no way exists for the Kantian to demonstrate the purity of that desire. As the previous chapter of this dissertation demonstrated, within Kantianism no one can know whether his or her actions are pure.<sup>76</sup> One can, therefore, never know if the reasons one comes to accept a moral position or morality in general are pure. Second, a good will is the only genuinely good entity that can exist.<sup>77</sup> Actions and consequences are not only less important than motives and intentions; they are irrelevant. If a good will "accomplishes nothing, and only good will is left (not, admittedly, as a mere wish, but as the straining of every means so far as they are in our control); even then it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something which has its full value in itself."<sup>78</sup> One may never know if the reason one accepts Kantianism is moral. One cannot, therefore, know if a Kantian truly accepts Kantianism, and the intractable egoist is also left without a reason to accept Kantianism.

Hare is, likewise, subject to this charge. His primary argument is that a gap exists between moral norms and human capabilities. He, like Kant, affirms the

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<sup>75</sup>The third premise is the nihilist equivalent of Jer 17:9. The nihilist, however, does not have Jer 17:10.

<sup>76</sup>Kant, *Ground Work of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 74-75.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.

inscrutability of human motives, but his answer is that God in his grace provides genuine motives.<sup>79</sup> The problem for Hare is that Kantianism is the ground upon which argues for Christianity. Kantianism leads one to posit a moral gap, and the moral gap leads one to conclude that Christianity is necessary. Hare cannot with logical consistency use the conclusion of his overall argument to support his premise. An atheistic intractable egoist like Nietzsche will claim that Hare is solving a unnecessary problem with an unnecessary solution. If one abandons Kantianism, one does not need to posit the existence of God.

MacIntyre's Aristotelianism does not succumb to the intractable egoist's argument for three reasons. MacIntyre would deny that the first premise of the intractable egoist's argument applies to Aristotelianism. Aristotelianism claims that one cannot have proper motives and desires without a proper moral education, which includes learning to curb one's passions, gaining life experience, gaining the ability to apply rules to actions, acquiring proper dispositions, grasping the *λόγος* of justice in order to apply simple rules to difficult situations.<sup>80</sup>

The second reason that the intractable egoist would not be able to make a similar argument against MacIntyre is that MacIntyre affirms the essential nature of narrative. In other words, MacIntyre recognizes that to which Nietzsche claims Kant is blind: "Your judgment 'this is right' has a pre-history in your instincts, likes dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences."<sup>81</sup> For MacIntyre, coming to accept Aristotelianism is one point in a narrative. The third reason that this criticism does not apply to MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is that as a eudaimonist, MacIntyre recognizes that the same reason that the intractable egoist makes egoistic decisions is what makes others become

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<sup>79</sup>John E. Hare, "Ethics and Religion: Two Kantian Arguments," *Philosophical Investigations* 34 (2011): 161.

<sup>80</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 114-15. For Aristotle's comments, see *Eth. nic.* 1094b28-1095a11.

<sup>81</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 263-64.

Aristotelians. Each one seeks happiness. The intractable egoist has, according to MacIntyre, failed to be rational in his or her pursuit of the good.

A second criticism that Nietzsche makes against Kant is that Kant does not base his moral philosophy upon reality. Nietzsche attacks the moralist for mentioning the categorical imperative:

It makes me think of the old Kant who had obtained the ‘thing in itself’ *by stealth* – another very ridiculous thing! – and was punished for this when the ‘categorical imperative’ crept stealthily into his heart and led him *astray – back* to ‘God’, ‘soul’, ‘freedom’, and ‘immortality’, like a fox who loses his way and goes astray back into his cage.<sup>82</sup>

The point that Nietzsche is making in this section is that Kant’s morality has no basis in reality.<sup>83</sup> Kant rejects knowledge of ideas like God, freedom, and immortality. When he, therefore, attempts to bring those ideas back into his philosophy, he does so illegitimately, according to Nietzsche. Moral norms are the same. Morality also does not have a basis in reality.<sup>84</sup> One has no reason to believe that moral norms exist as anything other than a fiction; likewise, one has no reason to believe that moral norms exist outside the mind.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 264. Italics in original.

<sup>83</sup>As Scruton notes, “Practical reason . . . makes no claims to truth.” Scruton, *Kant*, 94.

<sup>84</sup>Henry also makes this criticism of Kant: “Kant is able to crown his optimistic moral view only by a denial of any theoretical grasp of the metaphysical world, and by refusing to make any claims about the space-time world except from the subjective standpoint of how it exists for man as its perceiver. Only by such a costly epistemological transaction could the moral demands and ideals of human nature be rendered ‘secure’.” Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 111.

<sup>85</sup>Although Nietzsche’s statement is vague, other passages in Nietzsche’s works support this interpretation. The primary value of Kant, for Nietzsche, is in what Kant rejected. Concerning causation, Nietzsche states that “Kant began cautiously to delimit the realm within which this concept makes sense (and to this day we are not done with this fixing of limits).” *Ibid.*, 305. In a different work, Nietzsche claims that if many people actually read and believed in Kant’s works, “we should find it reflected in the form of a gnawing and crumbling skepticism and relativism.” He later writes, “Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive. The end of the moral interpretation of the world, which no longer has any sanction after it has tried to escape into something beyond, leads to nihilism.” Friedrich Nietzsche, “Live Dangerously,” trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: North American Library, 1975), 123, 131. The fact that in spite of his trenchant skeptical arguments, Kant appeared to accept concepts that common people still accept is the “secret joke” of Kant’s soul. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 205-6.

In light of Nietzsche's argument against Kant, the intractable egoist's claim against Hare is that unless Hare can demonstrate that morality genuinely exists, then the intractable egoist remains content in his or her egoism. The prescriptive realism of Hare is an attempt to rectify this problem in Kant.<sup>86</sup> As chapter 4 noted, the Good, for Hare, provides the metaphysical basis for morality.<sup>87</sup> The problem with Hare's view at this point is that, as in the first argument, the intractable egoist denies Hare's premise. Hare's view of supervenience ensures that his moral philosophy has no empirical ramifications and that one cannot deduce moral obligations from nature. Moral norms are "fitting,"<sup>88</sup> but as chapter 4 of this dissertation pointed out, the fittingness of moral norms is a concept that Hare never defines. In conclusion, although Hare is not as skeptical of moral knowledge as Kant, Hare does not give the intractable egoist reason to accept his own view.

MacIntyre's view is not susceptible to Nietzsche's argument at this point. MacIntyre would agree with the intractable egoist that if one is to accept the claims of morality, then morality must have empirical ramifications. Nietzsche begins and ends section 335 of *The Gay Science* with the charge, "Long live physics!"<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche is not praising the contemporary discipline of physics; he is referring to the importance of φύσις in normative behavior. Kantian morality is a fiction, according to Nietzsche, because Kant ignores φύσις. MacIntyre, however, also affirms the importance of φύσις in normative behavior.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>John E. Hare, "Prescriptive Realism," *Philosophia Reformata* 71 (2006): 14. Hare does not simply seek to resolve this difficulty from a Kantian framework, but unlike Kant, he attempts to provide his realism with a metaphysical basis.

<sup>87</sup>Hare, *God's Call*, 13.

<sup>88</sup>John E. Hare, "Scotus on Morality and Nature," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 25.

<sup>89</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 263, 266.

<sup>90</sup>The argument of *Dependent Rational Animals* is that the animal nature of human demonstrates the need for, what MacIntyre calls, "virtues of dependence." The argument is thus from φύσις. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago:

Both MacIntyre and Nietzsche begin major arguments from the distinction between human beings and non-human animals. Nietzsche argues that the progression from non-human animals to humans leads to the concept of the *Übermensch*, and MacIntyre argues to the importance of human dependence.<sup>91</sup> An analysis of the arguments of Nietzsche and MacIntyre are beyond the scope of this chapter. The point is that both begin with the same premise: observable human nature provides individuals with normative guidance. MacIntyre has a response to the intractable egoist, but Hare does not.

### **The Nietzschean Option**

For MacIntyre, the reasons that Nietzsche gives for abandoning Enlightenment models of moral thought are conclusive. If the above analysis is correct, then Hare's moral philosophy is susceptible to the criticisms of Nietzsche. Those criticisms in combination with the two criticisms given earlier in this chapter are sufficient to question the soundness of Hare's primary argument. Perhaps Hare is able to convince fellow Kantians that the Christian God is necessary for a viable morality, but he does not give those who are not Kantians sound reasons to accept his argument. Hare, moreover, does not provide cogent reasons to accept MacIntyre's premise that Enlightenment models of morality are not sound.

For MacIntyre's primary argument to be sound, one additional premise requires defense, especially in light of the Nietzschean criticism above. The last section above provided a defense of Nietzsche's arguments against morality, but to argue that MacIntyre's Aristotelianism withstands those criticisms is not to argue that Nietzsche's practical philosophy fails. MacIntyre's claim, however, is that the Nietzschean moral (or

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Carus, 1999).

<sup>91</sup>See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Clancy Martin (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005), 9-11, and MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*.

amoral) framework is not sound. Since Hare agrees with MacIntyre in his rejection of Nietzsche,<sup>92</sup> this chapter includes less space to this premise than to the premise regarding the untenable nature of Enlightenment frameworks. Nevertheless, anyone who argues that MacIntyre offers a more cogent moral philosophy than Hare must provide an overview of MacIntyre's criticism of Nietzsche.

MacIntyre's response to Nietzsche is threefold. First, the follower of Nietzsche is correct in his or her assessment of all morality only if all other moral views fail.<sup>93</sup> Nietzsche's position is against moral claims as such. If nihilism is true, no moral framework can be tenable.<sup>94</sup> If any view of morality is tenable, however, then Nietzsche's position fails. The argument of chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation is that MacIntyre's Aristotelianism provides explanatory scope. To provide explanatory scope, moreover, is to provide a reason for believing a thesis, and to provide a reason for believing in any moral philosophy is to provide a reason that nihilism is false. MacIntyre's claim is an existential affirmative against Nietzsche's universal negation. In arguing for his particular type of Aristotelianism, MacIntyre is also arguing that Nietzsche's analysis of moral philosophy is wrong.

MacIntyre also claims that Nietzsche misinterprets Homer. MacIntyre includes Homer in the classical tradition, but for Nietzsche, the Homeric hero is one example of "the noble race."<sup>95</sup> Homer exhibits the happiness of "a strong, bold, audacious soul,"<sup>96</sup> but the weaker races responded through "*ressentiment*."<sup>97</sup> Through examining a number

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<sup>92</sup>Hare, *The Moral Gap*, 20.

<sup>93</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 256-57.

<sup>94</sup>Nietzsche, "Live Dangerously," 131.

<sup>95</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26-27.

<sup>96</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 242.

<sup>97</sup>Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 27.

of virtues, MacIntyre argues that for Homer, the virtuous individual is someone who fulfills a social role well.<sup>98</sup> MacIntyre notes, “What Nietzsche portrays is aristocratic *self*-assertion; what Homer and the sagas show are forms of assertion proper to and required by a certain *role*.”<sup>99</sup> MacIntyre, therefore, undermines Nietzsche’s appeal to heroic society.

The most significant criticism that MacIntyre makes of Nietzsche is his direct attack on Nietzsche’s perspectivism.<sup>100</sup> MacIntyre concludes that the genealogist view fails because genealogists require what they deny. They deny that truth is more than the will to power, but they need the concept of truth in order to make this claim.<sup>101</sup> To write and discern the way that views of morality have changed assumes “impersonal, timeless standards.”<sup>102</sup> To carry out the task of genealogy and deconstructing all interpretations of reality requires an unmasked, enduring self.<sup>103</sup> For their ideas to be intelligible, moreover, certain basic norms of intelligibility must exist, but genealogists deny that these norms exist. They are not able to engage in rational inquiry.<sup>104</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided the argument that significant reasons exist for doubting Hare’s Kantianism. These reasons arise, moreover, from MacIntyre’s argument

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<sup>98</sup>MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 15. See Homer, *The Iliad*, 1, 253, for Nestor ἐὺ φρονεῶν. See Homer, *Odyssey*, 23, 30, when Telemachus acts σαοφροσύνησι. In each case, the individual is fulfilling his role well, but in neither case is the person acting with the virtues that Nietzsche exalts.

<sup>99</sup>MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 129. Italics in original. Although MacIntyre treats Homeric virtue in a number of places, his clearest and most detailed argument is in MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 12-29.

<sup>100</sup>For a summary of Nietzsche’s perspectivism, see Naugle, *Worldview*, 98-103.

<sup>101</sup>See Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 87, and MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 35-37.

<sup>102</sup>MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 45.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>104</sup>MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 165.

for Aristotelianism. The three major reasons for doubting Hare's Kantianism are that Hare neglects the importance of social roles, tradition, and empirical elements within moral philosophy. Also, in support for MacIntyre are his criticisms of Nietzsche's views. Arguments for Aristotelianism are arguments against nihilism, and in rejecting the concept of transcendent truth, Nietzsche rejects what his view requires.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The argument of this dissertation is that the Aristotelianism of Alasdair MacIntyre provides Christian apologists with a more cogent moral philosophy than the prescriptive realism of John Hare. In this dissertation, the two criteria for determining which moral philosophy is more cogent are the explanatory scope of the overall moral philosophy and the strength of the premises of the most important argument of each author. Chapters 2 and 3 showed that the explanatory scope of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism exhibits significant breadth, and chapter 4 demonstrated that the prescriptive realism of John Hare lacks explanatory scope. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated that the premises of MacIntyre's primary argument are stronger than the premises of Hare's primary argument. Hare's Kantianism was the primary subject of these chapters, and the contention was that his Kantianism does not withstand MacIntyre's criticisms of Kant in MacIntyre's primary argument.

In light of the thesis of this dissertation, a number of questions arise, and the purpose of this concluding chapter is to survey possible directions for further research. Two possible directions for research are not consistent with accepting MacIntyre's Aristotelianism. Some who reject his Aristotelianism may still accept his critique of Enlightenment moral philosophy. They may provide a critique of his Aristotelianism and argue that theological bases are the most cogent bases for all moral philosophy. A second direction that others may take is to compare MacIntyre's moral philosophy with another moral philosophy that is neither Aristotelian nor Kantian.

The primary issue that this chapter addresses is the direction a moral apologetic based on MacIntyre's Aristotelian might take. The first claim is that an

apologetic that coincides with much of what MacIntyre has stated about the relationship of philosophy to Christianity will take a similar form to Reformed epistemology. The second claim is that other areas within MacIntyre's moral philosophy provide premises for possible moral arguments for theism.

### **Aristotelian Apologetics**

The primary question that this dissertation raises for Christian apologetics concerns the structure of a moral argument based on Aristotelian premises. Since MacIntyre articulates a specific and unique type of Aristotelianism, these Aristotelian premises would differ significantly from premises that other Aristotelian apologists might offer. The most obvious place to look for the type of apologetic with which MacIntyre's Aristotelianism would be consistent is in his own writings. Although his writings concerning apologetic issues are sparse, MacIntyre does provide some hints as to what the form of an apologetic based on his philosophy might take.

### **Autonomy and Philosophy**

Early in his academic career, philosophy of religion was a primary concern for MacIntyre. As a co-editor with Antony Flew, MacIntyre is responsible for one of the most important works of philosophy of religion in the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Secularization, liberal Protestant theology, and the relationship between Marxism and Christianity were, moreover, major concerns early in his academic career.<sup>2</sup>

Since becoming an Aristotelian and a Thomist, MacIntyre has written less in the philosophy of religion. MacIntyre now places a greater emphasis on the distinction

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<sup>1</sup>Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

<sup>2</sup>For each of the issues, see the following works respectively: Alasdair MacIntyre, *Secularization and Moral Change* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); idem, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (1971; repr., Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 12-26; and idem, *Marxism and Christianity*, rev. ed. (New York: Schocken, 1968).

between philosophy and theology. For him, philosophy proceeds without assuming special revelation. He, therefore, rejects the view that the faith-seeking-understanding tradition is the primary way in which one may practice philosophy. Philosophy is, like carpentry or farming, a secular trade.<sup>3</sup> Just as one does not need Christian presuppositions to be a good fisherman, one does not need Christian presuppositions to be a good philosopher. Although theology and philosophy, according to MacIntyre, have a close relationship with one another, philosophy is a distinct discipline. Theology begins with the revelation of God.<sup>4</sup> He claims, therefore, that although he is a theist, his philosophy is “as secular in its content as any other.”<sup>5</sup>

This belief means that one who proceeds with Aristotelian premises will not include explicitly Christian premises in their philosophical arguments. Aristotelians, according to MacIntyre’s own type of Aristotelianism, will proceed according to the assumptions of moral philosophy that chapter 1 of this dissertation provides. MacIntyre rejects, therefore, the type of approach to which chapter 6 of this dissertation referred: the approaches of Carl Henry, John Milbank, or others who proceed on explicitly Christian premises.<sup>6</sup>

MacIntyre’s views contain two inconsistencies. First, tradition, for MacIntyre, is inescapable, and a tradition, as chapter 3 of this dissertation noted, determines the way one defines both one’s most basic assumptions and the criteria for truth.<sup>7</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2009), 167.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>5</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, “An Interview with Giovanna Borradori,” in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 266.

<sup>6</sup>For example, see John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), and Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977).

<sup>7</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 12. Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 222.

fundamental axioms of each individual thus have historical precursors, and the primary historical precursors one has signify one's tradition. The problem for MacIntyre is specifying how a Christian apologist or philosopher can proceed apart from explicitly Christian premises if his or her most basic agreements depend on Christianity. His view on the autonomy of philosophy requires him to hold the former assumption, and his view of tradition appears to imply the latter assumption.

The second inconsistency is in the way that MacIntyre formulates the debate between Christians and atheists. A major problem of the contemporary secularized culture, according to MacIntyre, is that individuals who are involved with debates between theists and atheists assume that atheists and theists simply disagree on the existence of God. For theists, this assumption is false in a significant way. For theists, whether or not God exists affects the basic structure of reality. MacIntyre claims that "theists believe that nature presents itself as radically incomplete, as requiring a ground beyond itself, if it is to be intelligible, and so their disagreement with atheists involves *everything*."<sup>8</sup> Whether one is an atheist or theist thus determines what one thinks the requirements of intelligibility are, what human beings are, and what has value.<sup>9</sup> The problem for MacIntyre is with such a wide view of disagreement between atheists and theists, the common ground upon which a theist may argue for the existence of God appears to be too meager for any substantive argument.

### **MacIntyre, Plantinga, and the Role of Apologetics**

On one hand, MacIntyre holds that philosophers must not proceed with explicit theistic assumptions in their arguments. On the other hand, MacIntyre holds that the

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<sup>8</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 47. Italics in original.

<sup>9</sup>For the way theism affects intelligibility and humanity, see *ibid.*, 77. For axiology, see *ibid.*, 8.

separation between theism and atheism is far broader than most realize. One can resolve this tension by differentiating two primary goals for Christian apologists. One of these goals is to provide the proper framework for theistic arguments, and the second goal provides positive moral arguments. The first goal corresponds to his view on the distance between theism and atheism, and the second goal corresponds to his view on the autonomy of philosophy. This section addresses the first goal, and the following section deals with the second goal.

One might not expect for significant similarities to exist between a Thomist like MacIntyre and a Reformed philosopher like Alvin Plantinga, but one can best understand the first goal of MacIntyre's apologetic by comparing his approach to Plantinga's approach to apologetics. Both philosophers seek to place a proper framework for arguing about theism or Christianity. The similarities occur in three ways. First, each philosopher sees arguments as unnecessary for rational belief in God. Second, each philosopher sees an important role for defensive apologetics, and, third, each philosopher also provides defeaters for atheism.

**The role of arguments.** The first connection between MacIntyre and Plantinga is that each philosopher believes that theistic arguments are unnecessary for belief in God to be rational. Both philosophers thus place less weight on the outcome of theistic arguments than other philosophers sometimes give. For Plantinga, belief in God is properly basic. The *sensus divinitatis* is the human faculty for believing in God, and such a belief does not need theistic arguments for belief in God to have warrant. Like beliefs that arise from memory or sense perception, theistic belief "isn't typically accepted on the basis of any argument at all, and the belief can have warrant even if the believer has no second-level beliefs at all about the belief in question."<sup>10</sup> Plantinga claims, moreover, that

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<sup>10</sup>Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179.

believing on the basis of argument is not good: “If my belief in God is based on argument, then if I am to be properly rational, epistemically responsible, I shall have to keep checking the philosophical journals to see whether, say, Anthony Flew has finally come up with a good objection to my favorite argument.”<sup>11</sup> Plantinga does not claim that theistic arguments are useless; they are simply not necessary.<sup>12</sup>

Like Plantinga, MacIntyre claims that arguments are neither a necessary nor healthy basis for belief in God. For a committed adherent to Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, one discerns the existence of God relationally or directly instead of inferentially:

To someone engaged in prayerful practice of the presence of God, whether Hasidic Jew, or Ignatian Christian, or Sufi Moslem, the thought that perhaps God does not exist would be an idle thought, certainly not a thought to be responded to by philosophical argument any more than the fanciful thought that some human friend whom one only hears from at long intervals has perhaps never existed.<sup>13</sup>

Although MacIntyre does not use the term *properly basic*, belief in God has the same basis for the believer in his view as in Plantinga’s view. From a theistic perspective, the disagreement between atheists and theists is, therefore, similar to a disagreement between those who are solipsists and those who are not solipsists. Both disagreements have to do with assuming that a reality behind personal contact exists. The solipsist and atheist deny the personal reality, and the theist and realist affirm that reality.

For MacIntyre, atheism is wrongheaded. Atheists fail to exhibit a sufficient amount of wonder and amazement at the world. He claims that given the atheistic narrative of the universe, one begins with physical realities like “hadrons, leptons, and

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<sup>11</sup>Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 67.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 82-83.

<sup>13</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, “On Being a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 84 (2011): 24.

bosons.”<sup>14</sup> These physical realities are what MacIntyre calls inputs. At the level of the typical atheistic narrative, he does not object to the claim that these entities, according to certain physicists, begin the storyline of the universe, as far as scientists can discern. The storyline, however, continues to the present, and the atheist’s responses to this outcome is insufficient:

The outputs with which it ends are a set of opera-loving, James Joyce quoting, equation-solving atheistic physicists. This is amazing! What makes it amazing is not at all the improbability of the outcome. Any particular statistical distribution of fundamental particles is, given their past distribution and the nature of their interactions, going to be highly improbable. . . . What is amazing is that, given *that* input, *any* step by step narrative should lead to *this* extraordinary outcome.<sup>15</sup>

The process of beginning with directionless entities that ends in self-reflective, intentional subjects ought to amaze individuals. The problem that scientists cannot solve is “explaining how *any* physical agency whatsoever could produce such an outcome.”<sup>16</sup> He concludes that unlike theists, atheists “resolutely refuse to be amazed at their own existence.”<sup>17</sup> He notes that this claim is not an argument. He is simply referring to the responses of atheists and theists at a pre-philosophical level. Theists respond to a person, and atheists insufficiently respond to a wonderful reality. MacIntyre and Plantinga thus frame arguments between theists and atheists in a particular way.

**Defending Christianity.** The second similarity between Plantinga and MacIntyre is in the way both see an important role for defensive apologetics. For Plantinga, postmodernism, pluralism, evil, evolution, and the incoherency of miracles are all possible defeaters for Christianity, and he responds to each objection.<sup>18</sup> Responding to

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<sup>14</sup>MacIntyre, “On Being a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture,” 26.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. Italics in original.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 27. Italics in original.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>For Plantinga’s response to postmodernism and pluralism, see Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 422-57. For his response to evil, see *ibid.*, 458-99. For his response to possible defeaters from evolution, see Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*

defeaters is an important aspect of Christian apologetics. For MacIntyre, likewise, theism entails three problems: the problem of evil, the issue of free will, and the meaning of theological terms.<sup>19</sup> Part of the task of Christian philosophy is showing how these concepts do not mean that theism is incoherent.

**The incoherence of atheism.** The third connection between MacIntyre and Plantinga is that both philosophers believe that an important task for philosophers is showing atheism to be false. Plantinga's most important defeater for atheism is his evolutionary argument against naturalism. Evolutionary biology, according to Plantinga, provides a defeater for naturalists. MacIntyre, likewise, claims that providing defeaters for atheism is an important objective for Christians who engage in philosophy. He claims that his fellow Catholic philosophers

need to redirect the debates [between theism and atheism] by focusing on the philosophical presuppositions of our critics and making *them and their position* rather than theism the matter for debate. We have to portray accurately and sympathetically the secular and secularizing cast of mind, so that we can exhibit ruthlessly the distortions, the weaknesses, the moral, scientific, and metaphysical vulnerabilities of that cast of mind.<sup>20</sup>

MacIntyre only summarizes two arguments against atheism, and one of the arguments is a moral argument. MacIntyre agrees with Nietzsche that without God, no universal perspective exists. Atheism, therefore, precludes any unifying worldview.<sup>21</sup> Since atheists in general maintain that they do have a worldview, then this argument is an argument against atheism. The second argument is that an argument that atheism cannot support genuine morality. Morality, according to MacIntyre, requires unconditional

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 199-1027, Kindle. For his defense of the possibility of divine intervention, see *ibid.*, 1034-767, Kindle.

<sup>19</sup>MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities*, 6-7.

<sup>20</sup>MacIntyre, "On Being a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture," 32. Italics in original.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.

commitment. Without unconditional commitment, one can always find a reason to commit grossly immoral actions. MacIntyre relies on Dostoevsky's famous line in *The Brothers Karamazov* that all things are morally permissible if God does not exist. MacIntyre's claim is not that without the existence of God, "objective right and wrong cannot exist."<sup>22</sup> His claim is, moreover, that moral dilemmas cripple the entire enterprise of morality:

What [Ivan] Karamazov *was* saying, what Dostoevski through Karamazov *was* saying, was that, if we take atheism to be true, then there is no type of action, no matter how horrifying, of which we can be sure that we could never find good reason to perform it, that it would never be overwhelmingly and overridingly in what we took to be the general interest to perform it. Dostoevski through Karamazov was not predicting Auschwitz or the Gulag. He was predicting the fire-bombing of Dresden and Tokyo, the saturation bombing of the Ruhr and the obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was predicting not the crimes of the obviously wicked, but the crimes of the apparently good, types of action that it is rational to prohibit unconditionally *only* if one is a theist.<sup>23</sup>

MacIntyre's argument is, therefore, not a moral argument for the existence of God; his argument is, conversely, an argument against the tenability of atheism. For him as for Plantinga, arguments against atheism are important.

Each of these three areas frames debates between atheists and theists. The first claim is that Christianity or theism does not stand or fall with arguments. The second and third areas focus on particular systems of belief. Plantinga and MacIntyre both engage in arguments within Christianity, theism, or atheism. The issue in each case is whether that particular system is coherent. None of the three claims require Christianity to be true, yet one may argue that in the latter two connections with Plantinga, debates are occurring within traditions.

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<sup>22</sup>William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 79.

<sup>23</sup>MacIntyre, "On Being a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture," 29-30. Italics in original.

## **From Aristotelianism to Christianity**

In light of the previous section, one can conclude that apologetics primarily occurs for MacIntyre in the individual analysis of belief systems or traditions. The way apologetics would occur at that level would be to seek to answer questions such as the following: Is atheism consistent with MacIntyre's Aristotelianism? Is Christianity consistent with MacIntyre's Aristotelianism? Knowledge of God for him, as for Plantinga, depends primarily on an immediate and personal knowledge of God, the experience of which entails propositions like God's existence.

While these purposes remain the most important purposes for MacIntyre, he also refers to positive arguments having a role in his own conversion. This emphasis corresponds to the fact that MacIntyre holds to the autonomy of philosophy. MacIntyre claims that his Aristotelianism led to his own conversion to Catholic Christianity, and he hints at two reasons that suggest a positive or constructive use of apologetics. He claims that the type of "teleologically-ordered universe" that Christianity presupposes and "rational theology"<sup>24</sup> were important aspects of his conversion. He does not, however, do more than briefly mention that these factors led to his conversion. The remainder of this section, therefore, sketches what the form of such arguments might take.

Since teleology is one of the topics that MacIntyre mentions led to his conversion and since chapter 2 of this dissertation claimed that teleology was a unifying concept for MacIntyre's moral philosophy, teleology would be the first area from which to construct a moral argument for the existence of God. Two suggestions are given in this section, and both of these suggestions are formally similar to intelligent design arguments and fine-tuning arguments. The first type of argument might begin with the claim that all moral philosophies that deny teleology a role in morality fail. The second premise then

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<sup>24</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview for *Cogito*," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, 268.

would be that teleology implies a designer. The conclusion of the argument would be that teleological moral norms also imply a designer.

One could also argue from a specifically human teleology. This argument would begin with the view that the human good is not exclusively biological. Defense of this premise would include what MacIntyre has written about the unconditional nature of moral obligation. The argument would proceed to the claim that atheism and pantheism do not sufficiently explain the human good. The conclusion to an argument of this sort would be the claim that theism is, therefore, the best explanation for a human good that is not merely biological.

Another area from which one may argue that coincides with MacIntyre's moral philosophy is the nature of narrative. This argument may take the form of ideal observer theory. If narrative is an essential concept to analyze the success or failure of a single human life, then one could argue that narrative is essential in determining whether a group of humans is or is not morally successful. The argument would then claim that narrative is a fundamental concept in determining the moral success of humanity at large. This perspective, however, requires a perspective that transcends one mind, and this perspective would be the perspective of a universal, moral mind. The argument would be that all moral thinking, therefore, presupposes the existence of God. This argument would not conclude with the existence of God, but the conclusion would be that all consistent moral thinking presupposes the existence of God.

These arguments are mere sketches, and many objections would arise. The purpose of this final section, however, is merely to offer suggestions. As proponents of these types of arguments responded to objections and offered objections to objections, the arguments would undoubtedly grow and take different forms. If the thesis of this dissertation is correct, however, arguments of this sort are important avenues for Christian apologists to consider.

## **Conclusion**

Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the most important contemporary moral philosophers. The thesis of this dissertation is that his Aristotelianism provides Christian moral philosophers with a more cogent moral philosophy than John Hare's prescriptive realism. Since an essential aspect of the claims of Christianity is that the relationship between God and morality is fundamental, Christian moral apologists, therefore, would do well to consider MacIntyre's Aristotelianism for premises for moral apologetics.

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### **Dissertations**

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- Hatfield, Jeremy Shane. "The Proposal for Darwinian Morality Offered by Michael Ruse: A Critical Assessment." PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013.

## ABSTRACT

### A COMPARATIVE CRITIQUE OF THE MORAL PHILOSOPHIES OF ALASDAIR MACINTYRE AND JOHN HARE

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This dissertation argues that the Aristotelianism of Alasdair MacIntyre is more cogent than the prescriptive realism of John Hare. Chapter 1 introduces the relationship between moral philosophy and apologetics and presents the thesis of the dissertation. Chapter 2 surveys the Aristotelian elements of MacIntyre's moral philosophy and provides an argument that these aspects of MacIntyre's philosophy provide his Aristotelianism with significant explanatory scope. Chapter 3 continues an analysis of MacIntyre's philosophy. The argument of this chapter is that the Thomist elements of MacIntyre's philosophy further the explanatory scope of his Aristotelianism. The chapter concludes with a response to two major objections. Chapter 4 presents the moral philosophy of John Hare and argues that three areas that appear to provide explanatory scope do not. Chapter 5 summarizes the Kantian elements of John Hare's moral philosophy. The argument of chapter 6 is that the primary argument of MacIntyre's moral philosophy is sounder than the primary argument of John Hare's moral philosophy. Chapter 7 provides the conclusion of the dissertation and explores the implications of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism for Christian apologetics.

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