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After Tradition?: Heidegger *or* MacIntyre, Aristotle *and* Marx*

Abstract: Philosophical tradition has been challenged by those who would have us look to our own practice, and to nothing beyond. In this, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger is followed by the politics of Hannah Arendt, for whom the tradition of political philosophy terminated with Karl Marx's theorization of labour. This challenge has been met by Alasdair MacIntyre, for whom the young Marx's reconceptualization of production as a social activity can inform an Aristotelianism that addresses our shared practices in traditional, teleological terms. Looking to the social nature of our practices orientates us to common goods, to the place of those goods in our own lives, and to their place within political communities. MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelian tradition has Heideggerian and other philosophical rivals, but he argues that it represents our best way of theorizing practice.

0. Heidegger and Aristotle

Martin Heidegger and his 'postmodernist' followers describe past, Western philosophy as 'the tradition'. Heidegger's project was to rethink the origins of this tradition and to 'destroy' its conceptual scheme (Heidegger 1962, 41–49), so as to uncover phenomenologically what of our elemental way of being has been concealed by a couple millenia of metaphysical dogma. Up until his 'turn' in the early 1930s, and especially prior to the publication of *Being and Time* (van Buren 1994; Kisiel 1995), the young Heidegger was in continuous engagement with Aristotle, whom he considered the most revealing philosopher of human being's worldliness and temporality. It was largely through reinterpreting Aristotle's texts and terminology that he hoped to discover how one might think differently from the tradition.

The concept upon which Heidegger focussed first and most consistently was that of being. His initial motivation was theological, Catholic, and scholastic, although he progressively moved from these concerns toward that of understanding and expressing what being is in terms that are somehow primordial and 'pre-conceptual'. This concern was with the ontic temporality of what can always become otherwise, rather than with atemporally suspending what 'is' within some conceptual scheme. Aristotle had conceptualized worldly being in terms of

particular forms, kinds or species, and of substantial individuals as instances of such species. Despite his anti-conceptualism, Heidegger's specific concern was with what it is to be human. Or, rather, his concern was with what it is to be fully and openly aware of one's own being, as a human. One's own being is temporally limited, but is within a world replete with equipment and possibilities.

Heidegger's phenomenological preoccupation with our awareness of being might well be characterized as philosophically modern and post-Kantian, but he instead characterized it as preconceptual and pretraditional. The text through which he found himself best able to articulate how tradition had concealed this primordial self-consciousness was *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Six (Heidegger 2002a, 129–137; 1997, 15-48, 93–118; 2007, 219–230), and this precisely because of its conceptual clarity. Here, Aristotle distinguishes between what tradition calls the intellectual virtues and what Heidegger called ways of (or of being disposed toward) discovering and perceiving entities. Of the five ways, those that need concern us are: *sophia*, *techne*, and *phronesis*. *Sophia* is the theoretical disposition toward things that are unchanging and unworldly, and *techne* is the knowledge of how to productively manipulate things that are ready to hand, whereas *phronesis* is practical insight into one's own being or, that is, the disposition of *Dasein* toward itself. Aristotle and the tradition have taken us the wrong way in prioritizing *sophia* over *phronesis*, and therefore in directing our attention away from our own being and acting.

It has been well said that, for Heidegger, "potentiality is to be understood as something disclosed and projected in the element of *I can*, insofar as it is revealed to me as *my possibility*", so that "his fundamental ontology is the ontology of *action* (*praxis*) and creativity (*poiesis*)" (Chernjakov 2005, 8, 14; Chernjakov's emphases; Greek transliterated). Human potentiality is *not* to be understood in terms of the actualization of a singular form. On Heidegger's interpretation, the traditional, teleological paradigm is a theoretical extrapolation from the experience of production, or *poiesis*, that erroneously conceptualizes the process of material production apart from the human activity, or *energeia*, of creation. Accordingly (and in accordance with his speculatively philological practice of reducing Aristotle's concepts, and even his neologisms, to their etymological beginnings), Heidegger interpreted Aristotle's term *energeia* literally, as "at workness" or "being at work" (Heidegger 1995, 188–189, 192–193; Brogan 2005, 130).[1] Reversing the traditional prioritization of actuality to potentiality, he argued that "higher than actuality stands *possibility*" (Heidegger 1962, 63, Heidegger's emphasis; see also e.g. Heidegger 1988, 308; 2007, 231; 1995). His own ontology was opposed to any universalism of forms, even in Aristotle's attenuated sense in which "primary being" is that of substantial individuals and actualization is contingent upon chance and external conditions, but this does not entail that he was opposed to any universalism whatsoever. His concern with the ontic is a

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[1] Joe Sachs' (1995; 1999) explicitly Heideggerian and anti-Thomistic argument for translating *energeia* as being-at-work is answered on behalf of Aristotelian tradition by Glen Coughlin (2005, xxvii–xxviii) but apparently ignored by other recent translators (even of *Metaphysics Theta*). In Knight 2007 I attempt to steer a course though Aristotle's own work in a way that takes bearings from both modes of interpretation.

concern with the universally fundamental and essential condition of individual human beings.

From the perspective of Heidegger's most faithful devotees, his genealogical rethinking of the origins of tradition amounts to the deconstruction of its conceptual scheme. As against this, Francisco Gonzalez has recently argued that Heidegger often distorts Aristotle's meaning horribly in accusing Aristotle of a metaphysics of presence that precludes temporality. For example, "Heidegger's interpretation" of "Aristotle's fundamental concept" of *energeia* "is not only wrong but disastrously wrong" (Gonzalez 2006a, 545) in allowing confusion of human activity with its material products, as are his ontological interpretations of *agathon* or good "as *a way of being* [. . .] in our *existing*, not in our acting," and of *telos* not as "'goal' or 'aim'" or good but as "outermost limit" (Gonzalez 2006b, 131–132; Gonzalez's emphases). On Gonzalez's account, Heidegger's "misinterpretation of Aristotle's fundamental concepts turned him aside too soon from a barely explored road at the beginning of the metaphysical tradition," (Gonzalez 2006a, 558) a road that was blocked by his ontologization of Aristotle's ethics (Gonzalez 2006b, 138).

The road down which Gonzalez points would appear to be that which has been named (by Manfred Riedel) 'the rehabilitation of practical philosophy'. This is a road that was opened up by Heidegger's rethinking of tradition's origins in his reinterpretation of Aristotle, but is delineated by Aristotle's conceptual distinctions in, above all, *Ethics* Six. The road of practical philosophy is that of *praxis* and *phronesis*, and is sharply bounded on the one side by *theoria* and *sophia* and, on the other, by *poiesis* and *techne*. Practical philosophy is unconcerned with ontology, and its concern with production is only that this be subordinated to practice. This road is therefore neither that of Heidegger nor of what he called 'the tradition'. Rather, according to its protagonists, it represents a more authentically Aristotelian tradition, now disclosed from beneath centuries of metaphysical overlay. The best known of these 'neo-Aristotelians' was Hans-Georg Gadamer, who freely admitted his attachments to both Heidegger and tradition and, also, the political incompetence of philosophers. For him, practice meant culture, and ethics derived from *ethos*. Others understand practice to be more political, and are therefore less ready to associate themselves with Heidegger, whose political blundering was worse than that of any stargazing Greek. One example is Wilhelm Hennis, who attributes his practical philosophy to the influence of Leo Strauss and admits no direct influence from Heidegger whatsoever. Another is Hannah Arendt, who, it can be argued, was at once Heideggerian and Aristotelian (Kisiel 2005, 153–158; Volpi 2007, 45–46; Knight 2008).

1. The Birth and Death of Political Philosophy

In 1924, alongside Gadamer, Arendt first listened to Heidegger interpret *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Six and use it as the medium though which to understand Plato's critique of sophistry in the name of truth (Heidegger 1997). Like

Gadamer, she took from Heidegger's focus upon *Ethics* Six what became for her the elemental idea that *praxis* should be conceptualized in contradistinction to both producing and theorizing. Unlike production, action has nothing to do with causing effects or with means to ends. Rather, it is free, spontaneous and expressively disclosive of the self.

After her political disillusionment with Heidegger, and after her subsequent critique of totalitarianism (Arendt 1968a), Arendt made her own project that of establishing the validity of the life of political speech and action in its own terms, apart from any purely philosophical life of the mind. Like Heidegger, she considered that her project required the deconstruction of philosophical tradition. However, the tradition she wished to deconstruct was not defined in terms of its ontological speculation. Rather, it was what she called "the tradition of political philosophy". This tradition was one of philosophers writing about politics, in order to make of political action a means to securing the necessary conditions for their own contemplative theorizing. It began when Plato politicized philosophical tradition in response to the death of Socrates (who the later Arendt characterized as a Sophist), and in the *Republic* the idea of "the good" ceases to be an object only of contemplation. Instead, it becomes the standard by which to judge, guide and order human affairs (Arendt 1968b, 107–115; 2005, 6–13, 25–32). Plato is concerned with action, but his concern is to enclose action within theory and to confuse it with production. This genealogical deconstruction of the traditional "relationship between philosophy and politics" was informed by Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's "parable of the cave",[2] but to this interpretation she added that it is "decisive that Plato makes the *agath*on the highest idea [...] for 'political' reasons" (Arendt/Heidegger 2004, 120–121; Greek transliterated).

Arendt's initial judgement of Aristotle was, like Heidegger's, that he continued and elaborated Plato's philosophy. Regarding his veritably teleological idea of something "having its end in itself" as "paradoxical", she contended that he "degrades [...] everything into a means", that he "introduced in a systematic way the category of means and ends into the sphere of action", and that he understood "*praxis* in the light of *poiesis*, his own assertions to the contrary notwithstanding" (Arendt 1953, 6). In *The Human Condition* she was less antipathetic, conceding that his concept of actuality theorized the characteristically Greek idea that "greatness [...] lie[s] only in the performance itself and neither in its motivation nor its achievement", adding once again how "paradoxical" is the idea of an "end in itself" but now allowing that, on Aristotle's own account, the "specifically human achievement lies altogether outside the category of means and ends" (Arendt 1958, 206–207). In her very last work she gave his theory of action its teleological due, acknowledging his account of *eudaimonia* as an end "inherent in human nature" (Arendt 1978, 61–62) and that he differentiated "the productive arts [...] from the performing arts". Here, she criticized only Aquinas for "neglect[ing] the distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*" that is "crucial for

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[2] At Arendt 1968b, 291 she specifies the German original of Heidegger 1998 as her source. An extended version is Heidegger 2002b, 17–106. For Gadamer's more nuanced interpretation, see Gadamer 1986, 73–103.

any theory of action" and, therefore, for ignoring the possibility "that there could be an *activity* that has its end in itself and therefore can be understood outside the means-end category" (Arendt 1978, 123–124; Arendt's emphasis).

It is a peculiarity of Arendt's account of the tradition of political philosophy that—although she says it began with Plato's idea of the good, although she follows Heidegger in saying that the tradition continued with Aristotle, and although she focusses upon Aristotle's teleology of what she calls ends and means—she makes nothing of Aristotle's teleology as a systematic temporalization of the good in terms of actualizable, specific goods, or of his idea that the specifically human good is something rationalizable as an aim. This issue, with which Gadamer attempted to deal directly (Gadamer 1986), is one that she ducks. Instead of talking of the human good, she, like Heidegger, talks only of "achievement" or "accomplishment". When she talks of teleology, she speaks only of "ends"—any ends. A further peculiarity is, therefore, that she writes of Thomas Hobbes not only as the great, early modern opponent of tradition but also as the great, early modern *pro*ponent of teleology. She can therefore describe him as the bourgeoisie's greatest ideologist in legitimating both their purposive accumulation of wealth and the sovereign's purposive accumulation of power, in a process that she saw as culminating in totalitarianism (Arendt 1968a, 139–143). Her objection is not the Aristotelian one that wealth and power are only instrumental goods external to the self, to be differentiated from those substantive, 'internal goods' which are the *aretai*, virtues, or excellences of character, and which are properly regarded as ends in themselves. Rather, her express objection to Hobbes is that action is the realm of contingency, and that therefore one can never with any certainty effect future ends by means of present action. Her underlying objection to Hobbes is, though, more practical: that his idea of a singular sovereignty conflicts with her idea of politics as an irreducible plurality of individual voices and actions. Here she prefers Machiavelli's opposition to tradition in banishing the idea "of the good" from "the public" to "the private sphere of human life" and its replacement by republican *virtú*, "the excellence with which man answers the opportunities the world opens up before him in the guise of *fortuna* [. . .] where the accomplishment lies in the performance itself and not in an end product which outlasts the activity that brought it into existence and becomes independent of it" (Arendt 1968b, 137, 153).

If Plato stands at the beginning of Arendt's "tradition of political philosophy", then at its end stands Karl Marx. Arendt had been brought up to respect Marx, and, despite what was done in his name in the twentieth century, she never blamed *him* for totalitarianism. She understood him as a rebel against the German ideology of Hegelianism, the supposed culmination of philosophical tradition, in his following of Feuerbach's inversion of Hegel's account of the relation of 'man' to 'Idea' and, further, in his account of ideas as epiphenomenal, superstructural predicates of the basic, temporal and historical subject of human 'species being'. However, she later argued that such an inversion of concepts remains within the same conceptual scheme, and she opposed any such 'dialectical' project of combining rationality with actuality as involving the politically dangerous confusion of freedom with necessity. Marx, in combining Hegel's "notion

of history with the teleological political philosoph[y] of" Hobbes (Arendt 1968c, 77), compounds Hobbes's error in extending a teleological conception of action from instrumentally rational actors to "man" as a species. What she regarded as the Marxist idea that history can be intentionally made, she considered even more erroneous than the Hobbesian idea of the state as an artifact.

Where Marx broke with tradition, on Arendt's account, was in the radicalism of an ambition that she understood as profoundly philosophical. Marx rebelled not just against the philosophy of Hegel, and not just against the capitalism that Hegel legitimated as rational actuality, but also against the human condition of our very being in the world. This rebellion she understood as radicalizing Plato's introduction of philosophical ideas as standards by which to judge the world of human affairs. Whereas Hegel's dialectic was supposed to synthesize actuality with rationality, necessity with freedom, Marx's was intended to subordinate actuality to reason, to abolish necessity in the cause of freedom, and to bring about the culmination of humanity's 'making' of history in the full actualization of philosophy's traditional ideals of freedom and reason, justice and goodness.

Marx's theoretical presumptuousness was informed by what Arendt alleged was his confusion of action with causally productive, end-means 'work' and, also, of the creative freedom of work with what she differentiated as the biological necessity of endless 'labour'. Whereas prior tradition had concealed action beneath theory, Marx concealed the freedom of action within a necessity that was at once historical and biological, just as he hid the political interaction of the plurality of 'men' within the history and 'society' of a unitary humankind. Therefore, even if Marx had been the greatest critic of the commercial society legitimated by Hobbes, he was also, Arendt alleged, the greatest prophet and champion of the twentieth century's mass society of technology and technique, of consumption and labour, in predicting "that the working class will be the only legitimate heir of classical philosophy" (Arendt 1968d, 21). Her primary interest in Marx, as in Plato and Hobbes, was in him as a political thinker. She often listed him alongside Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as a destroyer of tradition, but it is Marx who had a political impact upon the twentieth century by attempting to pose an alternative to tradition in replacing ontology with history and politics with society.

What politics should consist in for Arendt was never very clear. Her political ideal was that of action for its own sake and speech for the sake of persuasion, but insofar as persuasion is undertaken for any further goal then both it and action lose their authenticity. Her institutional ideal was that of the creation and federation of local councils (see especially Arendt 1965, final chapter), but this ideal seldom informed what she wrote of politics because of her grounding in Heidegger's ontology of action. For her, as for him, "higher than actuality stands possibility", but on her account action for the sake of mundane goals has aggregated historically into an apolitical 'society'. It is this rise of society (like the rise of technology, for the later Heidegger) that has, at base, eliminated both politics and tradition, and it is this historical process of which she considered Marx the greatest prophet.

Just as Aristotle is crucial to the tradition on the account of Heidegger, so too

is he on that of Arendt. Rather as Heidegger uses Aristotle to create an image of 'primordial' Greek ideas of being which he then alleges were concealed by means of Aristotle's conceptual scheme, Arendt uses him to present an impression of action and politics which she alleges he contravened and undermined. The reduction of politics to economics culminated with Marx but was begun by Aristotle, who introduced the idea of 'rule' from the *oikos* to the *polis*. Describing rule in terms of authority, and denying any idea of a specifically human good which might legitimate that authority, Arendt presented authority as amoral domination and, therefore, presented Aristotle's authoritarianism as a radicalization of Plato's concealment of Greek freedom. Again, for Arendt, as for Heidegger, Aquinas is even more guilty than Aristotle of concealing the primordiality of Greek "*politikon*" with the obfuscation of Latin "*socialis*" (Arendt 1958, 23).

The basic objection of Heidegger and Arendt to philosophical tradition was that it causes us to look away from our own being and acting, and that it is this being and acting which should be the focus of our concern. The later Heidegger's critique of the tradition of 'ontotheology' was that it subordinates our being to that of 'God', and this critique may be understood as developing a line of thought that began with Feuerbach and passed through Nietzsche. Arendt's critique of the tradition of political philosophy was that it subordinates action to 'good' and politics to 'society'. For both of them, we should therefore look beneath and before the tradition. But what they deny, Alasdair MacIntyre affirms.

2. MacIntyre and Aristotle

MacIntyre's *After Virtue* answers the Heideggerian challenge to tradition. He describes the book as "a study in moral theory", and his express antagonist is Nietzsche, who challenged morality, not Heidegger, who ignored moral theory as derivative from ontology. When he wrote the book, MacIntyre had not adequately thought through the implications for the history of philosophy of his newly found commitment to tradition. Therefore, like Heidegger, he wrote of "the tradition" in the singular. Morally, it was "the tradition of the virtues". Philosophically, it was "Aristotelian". Like Heidegger, he regards Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as foundational for later tradition, but, unlike Heidegger, he attributes that status to the entire text and not just to Book Six. Virtue he therefore understands as an essential concept for an Aristotelian moral theory. Even more central is the concept of good.

Elsewhere, I have emphasized the influence of Gadamer on MacIntyre's initial turn to Aristotelianism. What should here be added is the underlying influence of Catholic, scholastic and Thomist tradition. Heidegger's own early ontotheology derived from this tradition, and he spent his life attempting to escape it. MacIntyre was not thrown into this tradition as was Heidegger, but his philosophical engagement with it began in 1947, at the same time as his engagement with Marxism and, initially through Sartre, with Heideggerianism. His *A Short History of Ethics* began by tracing the genealogy of the concepts of good and virtue, but it was not until *After Virtue* that he was able to articulate these

concepts in elaborating a moral theory. That he was able to do so owed far less to Gadamer than to Thomism. Although, like German neo-Aristotelians, the tradition that *After Virtue* purported to rehabilitate was one of practical philosophy, the concept of good that defined MacIntyre's Aristotelianism was one that identified it as a *telos*. Here, MacIntyre's Aristotelianism was already thoroughly Thomistic and unHeideggerian. Gadamer had accepted the idea of the good as a *telos* or end in the sense of an intentional goal but, even in *After Virtue*, MacIntyre intended something more ontological and natural. Heidegger and Arendt both consigned any such idea to the tradition. For them, any specification of human potential as natural is a limitation of possibility.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre, like Arendt, described teleology in terms of 'means' and 'ends'. Unlike Arendt, he accepted the idea of an end in itself and, also, (following an English tradition of interpreting *Ethics* Six; Knight 2007, 135–136) that virtue is a 'constitutive' or 'internal means' to the end of the specifically human good. As MacIntyre puts it, following moral rules and cultivating such excellences of character as courage, truthfulness, temperance and justice is what progresses us from our 'untutored' state to the human end or *telos* of rational self-fulfilment. Whereas the wealth, health and suchlike that Aristotle called 'external goods' are means to the human *telos* insofar as they *enable* us to cultivate our internal good, the virtues or excellences are *constituents* of that good, so that exercising the virtues forms us into the kinds of being we have the natural potential to become. On this account, to look to the good is to look to one's own being, and to act morally is to act for one's own good. Conceived neither as an external standard nor as an end in itself but as a means to such an end, morality might be justified in a way that meets the Nietzschean challenge.

What is novel about *After Virtue* is not its famous rejection of Aristotle's 'metaphysical biology' but its proposition that some new teleological justification of morality must be elaborated in its place. What the book substitutes for 'metaphysical biology' is social theory, suggesting that every moral philosophy "presupposes a sociology" (MacIntyre 2007, 23). Sociology here substitutes for ontology, in a way that is profoundly anti-Nietzschean, anti-Heideggerian, and anti-Arendtian, although what MacIntyre intends is not the idea of society as a historical totality proposed by Hegel or Marx. Rather, he extends the idea of the good as the *telos* of an individual actor to an idea of goods as *tele* of what he describes as shared, social practices.

This concept of 'practices' is new to the Aristotelian tradition, and MacIntyre makes no attempt to equate it with either traditional '*energeiai*' or '*praxeis*'. To call practices human *energeiai* would be to imply that each is universally predicable of any fully formed human being, whereas MacIntyre's practices are far more contingent and particularistic than this. The thought that Aristotelian ethics is 'particularistic' has been popularized by Martha Nussbaum, John McDowell, Terence Irwin and others. Their stress upon the contingency of actions and the ethical limits of rule-following, and therefore upon the need for *phronesis* or practical judgement, certainly shares much with Arendt. It also shares something with what the early Heidegger said of *phronesis*, and even with what he

made of *phronesis* in elaborating his idea of *Dasein*. And it also certainly shares much with what MacIntyre says of Aristotle and of ethics. But what MacIntyre says of practices is particularistic in a further sense. Practices are not like individual *praxeis* or actions, and are not at all like events. On the contrary, they are ongoing sources of rules and standards by which actions are guided and judged. In this, they are more like traditions. What they are most like in Aristotelian terms are *technai*, productive crafts, and MacIntyre often says that to become a practitioner is "to learn as an apprentice learns" (e.g. MacIntyre 1990a). Such practices include scientific and other theoretical disciplines aiming at universal truths. Evidently, MacIntyre's idea of practices contravenes what the likes of Arendt and Gadamer regard as crucial conceptual distinctions.

MacIntyre illustrates practices' particularity by reference to the phenomenology of colour and the practice of painting. The ability to distinguish black from white might be considered a universal aptitude of anyone with sight, but MacIntyre cites Vincent van Gogh's ability to discriminate between the many shades of both black and white in the paintings of Franz Hals. He cites van Gogh as "someone who had learned to see, *really* to see colors", and (following Adolf Reinach) cites such learning as an example of "the phenomenological way of seeing". The capacity "to recognize minute sameness and difference in color" might be universal, but its "development and exercise" is particular to those "engaged in attending to the same phenomena" as were Hals and van Gogh in the "cooperative activity" of painting. It is those who have learned to paint who can "confirm" or "disconfirm" an individual's judgement about colour. (MacIntyre 2006a, 20; MacIntyre's emphasis) This practical particularity is only implied in MacIntyre's account of the phenomenologically impersonal way of seeing, but he spells it out in detail when he cites van Gogh on Hals elsewhere in elaborating his account of practices (MacIntyre 2006b).

As MacIntyre says in *After Virtue*, every practice has goods particular and "internal" to it that its participants accept as ends for them to pursue and actualize, and these goods are of two kinds. "There is first of all the excellence of the products, both the excellence in performance by" such practitioners as portrait painters and the excellence of, for example, each portrait produced. Secondly, there is the "good of a certain kind of life", such as the life of a painter. (MacIntyre 2007, 189–190) This second kind of good internal to a practice is important for the narrative unity and intelligibility of lives, a central aspect of a life that is lived well being the individual's progress in achieving excellence within the practices in which she engages. Productive crafts are paradigmatic in that they aim at some end separate from the practitioner herself, so that it is by subordinating her untutored desires to a shared idea of a good that an individual learns to acknowledge the authority of impersonal standards of excellence. It is through emulating what MacIntyre calls such "objective" standards (MacIntyre 1993) that individuals learn to better themselves, making themselves accountable to others with whom they share those standards established in actualizing some common good that is itself irreducible to their untutored desires.

Such internal goods and *tele* MacIntyre contrasts with those goals of power and money for which Arendt attacks what she calls Hobbes' 'teleological' con-

ception of action. Power and money are, MacIntyre specifies, 'goods external to practices'. This distinction between goods internal and external to practices enables him to oppose both Hobbes and any claim that action should aim at no good apart from the actor. Hobbes is mistaken in proposing that the accumulation of such external goods as power and money is rightly pursued for its own sake, or for the mere satisfaction of untutored desires. Nonetheless, power and money are goods and are, therefore, worth pursuing, but only as efficacious means in pursuit of goods internal to social practices or in enabling individuals to cultivate those goods internal to themselves as human beings.

In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre elaborates a second conceptual distinction between kinds of good. Power and money are not only goods 'external' to human beings and to social practices; they are also 'goods of effectiveness'. This expression neatly and positively encapsulates what is good about power and money, as well as what is good about skills that might be regarded as internal to human beings. Such goods of effectiveness MacIntyre juxtaposes to goods of excellence. Again, a point of this conceptual distinction is to indicate a hierarchy of goods. Goods of excellence (like goods internal to practices) are superlative goods in themselves, whereas goods of effectiveness (like goods external to practices) are good in a way that is more conditional and derivative.

Goods of excellence appear to be of two kinds. First, there are goods of excellence that are internal to human beings as such; that is, as naturally interdependent animals capable of independent practical reasoning. These are the specifically moral virtues, understood in a way that is Aristotelian in a Thomistic and fully traditional sense. What might be differentiated as a second kind of good of excellence pertains to those standards of what MacIntyre has already called 'excellence in performance'. These standards MacIntyre now characterizes, in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, as a kind of good internal not so much to shared practices but to individuals as practitioners. They are objective standards that it is good for human subjects to emulate and achieve in their own actions, even though this objectivity is something particular to the practice. They are not simply skills, which, with Aristotle, MacIntyre says can be exercised or not, and can be exercised to effect either good or bad ends. Rather, we might say, they are skilful actions performed in accordance with particular, shared, practical standards of goodness. It is in emulating the standards so far established within a practice that an actor advances his or her own excellence as a practitioner, and, in pursuing the good internal to a practice, she is habituated not only into the skills particular to that practice but also into the moral virtues necessary to sustain and progress any such practice. In this way, practices are the schools of the virtues.

Both kinds of good of excellence—of individual human beings as such, and of individuals as practitioners—are internal to human beings as actors, but the second kind again refers to social practices of producing and theorizing. In this, to repeat, MacIntyre's conceptual distinctions cut across those that Arendt and other post-Heideggerian practical philosophers regard as fundamentally Aristotelian.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre proposes his sociology of practices as the pre-

supposition of a 'narrative' and teleological conception of the self, in which the person's desires are educated and her actions unified through her quest for the good life. This good is not stipulated at the start of her life but something that, insofar as her life is coherently recountable and intelligible, she progressively understands as she advances toward her goals, so that she can explain how she advanced from who she was to who she is, and to what future condition she intends to progress. Insofar as one's life is teleologically ordered, one may understand the place of particular goods within it by reference to its good as a whole.

Some of what MacIntyre says of practices might be thought redolent of some of what is said by Heidegger. If so, the great difference that must be appreciated is that Heidegger celebrates practice or practices that are prereflective and preconceptual. To conceptualize practice he regards as inauthentic, as directing us away from practice's 'everydayness'. In contrast, although MacIntyre acknowledges that practices often comprise something like a Heideggerian background to fully conscious intentionality and action, he thinks that practices and practitioners benefit from explicating shared goals and standards. Moreover, the conservative rationale of Heidegger and other theorists of practice's tacitness is, on MacIntyre's account, now rendered untenable. This is because practices are now not concealed by philosophical tradition but are, he argues, suppressed by state and corporate institutions. To this, Heideggerians are theoretically blind. This is why MacIntyre works to reconceptualize practice.

3. MacIntyre and Marx

MacIntyre "remain[s] deeply indebted to Marx's critique of the economic, social, and cultural order of capitalism" (MacIntyre 2007, xvi), and what is seldom appreciated of his arguments that moral philosophy requires social theory and that rival rationalities conflict is their debt to Marx. In neither of these respects does Marx share anything with Heidegger. Nonetheless, as Arendt's attention to the young, Feuerbachian Marx should remind us, Marx did share something with Heidegger. Marx, too, thought that human beings should not look to some alien ideal of good or god, that such ideas are reifications of human attributes and activities, and that the elemental human activity is production. MacIntyre agrees with Marx's critique of Feuerbach. For Feuerbach, human beings are alienated from their own activity because they fallaciously project their powers on to some merely theoretical being (Wartofsky 1977, especially 328–340). For Marx, in contrast, human beings are alienated from their productive practice because the social structure they inhabit really does take ownership and control of that activity away from them. For Feuerbach, as for Heidegger, we should reform our consciousness by looking to our own being and acting. For Marx, as for MacIntyre, we need to change our shared social actuality, because social actuality necessarily conditions individual consciousness. In this, sociological sense, MacIntyre may be regarded as a materialist critic of Heidegger's German ideology.

The possessively individualist conception of the self that was promoted by Hobbes and condemned by Arendt is explained by Marx. For Marx, the self is naturally social but ideas predicable of the self are socially and historically constituted. Capitalist society promotes a privatized idea of the good of commodity acquisition that is necessary to the needs of market capital accumulation and is legitimated by liberalism. MacIntyre agrees here with Marx, and his critique of the instrumentalist justification of action therefore exceeds that of Heideggerians. He adds that a possessive conception of the self can never offer an adequately comprehensive idea of the human good, because liberalism's idea of a good that is privatized is also of goods that are incommensurable and, therefore, of a self that is compartmentalized in its pursuit of such goods.

MacIntyre extends his critique of instrumentalism in juxtaposing practices to 'institutions'. What he intends by this term is, paradigmatically, capitalist and managerial corporations, as well as capitalism's bureaucratic state. Institutions, he says, "form a single causal order" with the practices they organize, and yet are also in constant tension with them (MacIntyre 2007, 194). If practices aim at particular or internal goods, then institutions aim at the acquisition and distribution of such external goods as money, power and status. Practices need external goods, as do individuals, but, just as the good life for an individual depends on her subordination of external to internal goods rather than her accumulation of external goods for their own sake, so too does the good of practices—and therefore of individuals as practitioners—require that money, power and authority be organized for the sake of goods internal to practices rather than substituted for their pursuit. A teleological ordering of social relations would subordinate institutions to practices, and the reification of capital as something to be subserved by human beings is only one expression of the contrary manipulation of ordinary actors' shared practices by managerial institutions. It is Marx's reduction of all social relations to those of production, and therefore of all contemporary power to that of capital, that made it easy for Stalinists to present what MacIntyre calls 'state capitalism' (and what Arendt called 'totalitarianism') as if it were 'socialism'.

Like Arendt, MacIntyre understands Marx as attempting to break from Hegel's philosophy but nonetheless as continuing to operate within Hegel's conceptual scheme. In this, he contests Louis Althusser's claim that Marx shifted through "an epistemological break" to the paradigm "of a new theoretical science" (MacIntyre 1991, 603), even if he concurs with Althusser in rejecting Lukácsian historicism (albeit on different grounds than those of Althusser's "generalizing scientism"; MacIntyre 1976, 158). "It was", he says, "an Hegelian mistake to envisage history as the self-realization of the Idea" (MacIntyre 1998b, 134), and it remains a mistake to envisage history as the self-realization of our species-essence. Hegel imputes a universal and teleological rationality to history and, therefore, to the actuality of capitalist 'civil society' as a 'system of needs', and Marx retains this imputation. It is to this extent, only, that there is plausibility in Arendt's characterization of Marx as the past prophet of present capitalism. Although MacIntyre shares much of her critique of society insofar as this is understood as the civil society of capitalism, his account of practices, like Marx's

account of production, demonstrates that social relations extend far earlier and deeper than modern institutions. Although he, like Marx, socializes teleology (and although he acknowledges that "it was an Hegelian insight to understand history as partially the realization of a series of ideas"; 1998b, 134), MacIntyre does not historicize it. He has *never* imputed to capitalism the degree of systemic rationality that Marx concedes. What he takes from Marx's economics—which is now more than he did (MacIntyre 2006c, 152)—is only the labour theory of value and of exploitation, and therefore the reality of social conflict, and not everything else that Marx proposes follows from his theory of value in exchange. As for liberalism, he acknowledges its rationality whilst asserting that it is mistaken. In rethinking Marx's premises, the most MacIntyre concedes to liberalism is that its "mistake [is] embodied in institutionalized social life" (MacIntyre 1998a, 229), that its rationality is indeed actualized in capitalism and in its sovereign, bureaucratic nation-state.

MacIntyre regards the *Theses on Feuerbach* as the culmination of Marx's philosophy, pointing in the direction of a road down which Marx did not go but along which MacIntyre proposes we proceed in order to transcend "the standpoint of civil society" (MacIntyre 1998a, 224, 234). This is not the road of "theory divorced from practice", which is "characteristic of civil society", but of "a particular kind of practice, practice informed by a particular kind of theory rooted in that same practice" (MacIntyre 1998a, 225, 230). What he means here by "a particular kind of practice" is what in *After Virtue* he called practices. These he here "stand[s] in sharp contrast to the practical life of civil society". Despite acknowledging that something very like his own idea of practices is implied by Marx's Hegelian reference to "*objective* activity", MacIntyre insists that "it is a contrast best expressed in Aristotelian rather than in Hegelian terms" (MacIntyre 1998a, 225; MacIntyre's emphasis). As evidence, he points to Lancastrian and Silesian weavers of Marx's time. "What made the practice of the[se] hand-loom weavers revolutionary" was their own "mode of life", which gave them a conception "of a good and of virtues adequate to the moral needs of resistance" to capitalism, to "proletarianization", and to all of the alienation, exploitation and demoralization that this entails (MacIntyre 1998a, 232). They were able to "transform themselves and educate themselves through their own self transformative activity", and their militant defence of this shared practice in resistance to the pressure of capitalist exchange relations was such that it was "entitled to be called 'revolutionary' " (MacIntyre 1998a, 231, referring to "the first and third theses"). Marx, MacIntyre suggests, was prevented from seeing this by his Hegelian historicism, which obliged him to view capitalism as progressive.

On a post-Heideggerian understanding, Aristotelianism is defined precisely by its divorce of theory from practice and of practice from production. What MacIntyre here intends by "Aristotelian [. . .] terms" is therefore something that contrasts sharply with not only the theory and practice of capitalist civil society but also the theories of practice proposed by Arendt and Gadamer. In controverting the standpoint of capitalism, MacIntyre's Aristotelianism also contravenes the distinctions that are characteristic of such neo-Aristotelian practical philosophy. An Aristotelian theory of social practice that is rooted in the very activities that

it theorizes—including both productive crafts and theoretical disciplines—is a specific kind of Aristotelianism, and what is most striking is MacIntyre's claim that this "Aristotelian" theory is already latent within a wide range of shared practices. Ordinary "practices have an Aristotelian structure", he says, adding that what we "have already learned" as ordinary actors may be "informed and enriched by philosophical theory" (MacIntyre 1998c, 151).

MacIntyre is no relativist. He is therefore happy to equate the Hegelian terminology of "objective activity" with what he presents as the Aristotelian terminology of "practices". To this extent, he is still agreeing with Marx when he says that "to regard individuals as distinct and apart from their social relationships is a mistake of theory" that is "embodied in institutionalized social life", so that under capitalism there is "a contradiction" whereby "human beings are generally deprived of a true understanding of themselves and their relationships" (MacIntyre 1998a, 228–229). Indeed, to this extent he even agrees with Althusser's "understanding of capitalism as a set of structures that inescapably function in and through modes of dissimulation" (MacIntyre 1991a, 604) but fail to express the totality of social relations. On this account, practices *can* escape capitalism's instrumental rationality and enjoy a relative autonomy from capitalist structures, even if handloom weavers were defeated in their collective attempt to make their own history.

Instead of taking MacIntyre's Aristotelian road after writing the *Theses*, Marx neglected their implication that "objective standards of goodness, rightness and virtue" might be "articulated within practices" (MacIntyre 1998a, 233). Marx therefore never developed the idea that "individuals discover in the ends of [a] practice goods common to all who engage in it [. . .] which they can make their own only by allowing their participation in the activity to effect a transformation in the desires which they initially brought with them to the activity", whereby "there comes about a 'coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of [the] human activity of self-changing'" (MacIntyre 1998a, 225–226, quoting the third thesis). Goods that are concealed by capitalism are revealed through participation in such cooperative practices.

Marx did not take MacIntyre's Aristotelian road because, in attempting to break from Hegel's philosophy, he prematurely abandoned all philosophical enquiry. Instead of looking for examples of alternative practice and rationality (as he had in 1844; Marx 1975, 365; MacIntyre 1998d, 46–47), he retained the Hegelian idea of history as the source of a universal truth apprehensible only by those initiated into the correct theory. He therefore allowed what became the Marxist tradition to take the erroneous methodological road of "the ideology of bureaucratic authority" and "managerial expertise" (MacIntyre 1998e; 1973; 2007, 74–108). Against this, MacIntyre argues that, in shared practice, the highest kind of knowledge is that which is commonly recognized as such by actors themselves, which includes knowledge of goods, skills, and objectively valid reasoning.

It is, in part, because he himself retained an Hegelian epistemology that Marx's successors so often fell into the error against which he had warned in his third *Thesis*; that of regarding "human beings in two incompatible ways, on the

one hand as products of objective social and natural circumstances and on the other as rational agents". By understanding themselves in the latter way and others in the former, twentieth-century Marxists frequently "cast themselves in the role of educator" and those others in that of "the passive recipients of what they as managers effect[ed]" (MacIntyre 1998a, 231). It is for this reason that MacIntyre judges that "Marxism was self-defeated and we too, Marxists and ex-Marxists and post-Marxists of various kinds, were the agents of our own defeats", so that it is now necessary "first to understand this and then to start out all over again" (234).

By "start[ing] out all over again", MacIntyre presumably intends something less than that which was attempted in Heidegger's return to Aristotle but something more than simply embracing Marx's negative critique of capitalism and its institutions. Although he says that his critique of Marx's premature abandonment of philosophy "presuppose[s] the truth of Carol Gould's account of Marx's ontology of individuals-in-relation", or of human beings as social and not just political animals, it is unlikely that he would endorse what Gould calls Marx's "depart[ure] from Aristotle" in "hold[ing] that individuals create [their] nature in their activity" and that "this eventuates in a conception of a changing and developing essence" of human being (MacIntyre 1998a, 225; Gould 1978, 34). Rather, he would insist that our nature remains essentially the same but that it includes a potentiality to actualize our internal good that depends upon external goods and conditions, and that these conditions are material, intellectual, institutional, social, and historical. Here, Marx's principal point about humanity's social nature is that includes a potentiality to change our common conditions. The most important point that MacIntyre takes from Marx is that such conditions can either facilitate or alienate human beings from their own practice, from what Aristotle called their *energeia* or being-at-work. Capitalism constitutes much more than a simple absence of the necessary conditions. Rather, to adapt Arendt's terms, capitalism reduces work to impersonal labour whereas work should be understood and ordered as goal-orientated action. In MacIntyre's terms, capitalist civil society therefore constitutes an institutionalized mistake.

4. Rival Traditions

For Heidegger, it is impossible to philosophize entirely apart from tradition. Therefore, on his influential account, it is important to return constantly to the Greek origins of philosophical tradition as revealed in Aristotle's texts, so as to subvert later dogma. As Gonzalez indicates, Heidegger hereby opened up a road which, even though he did not take it himself, has been gone down by numerous philosophers of *praxis*, including Arendt.

What Gonzalez says of Heidegger, MacIntyre says of Marx: that he opened up a philosophical road which he himself did not take, but which we should. Although this road is also that of an Aristotelian concept of practice, it is nonetheless a different road. It is constituted by that same Thomistic tradition which Heidegger and Arendt accuse of concealing and forgetting being and acting.

In response, MacIntyre argues that Aquinas himself rethought Aristotelianism's first principles in a way that greatly progressed it as a tradition (MacIntyre 1988) and subverted institutionalized powers (MacIntyre 2006d). To the names of Aristotle and Aquinas, he has now conjoined that of Marx (MacIntyre 2006e, x–xi). This is not because Marx himself progressed Aristotelian tradition but because he opened up a sociological road down which Aristotelians, including both MacIntyre and others (MacIntyre 2001), have since attempted to progress their tradition's understanding of action.

MacIntyre agrees with Heidegger that it is impossible to philosophize apart from tradition. This is one reason why he, too, returns to the Greeks, but the way in which he does so evinces the very different conclusions he draws from the concept of tradition which, in *After Virtue*, he says presupposes that of social practices. Like Nietzsche, he has often traced tradition back beyond philosophy through to what is revealed of its social origins by Homer. He has done this because he thinks that moral concepts of good and virtue predate specifically philosophical ideas and, also, that, conceived as a distinct activity, philosophy is itself a social practice.

On MacIntyre's account, Greek philosophers soon divided into two rival traditions in reflecting upon social order and activity. One tradition began with Socrates and Plato, and culminated, in the ancient world, with Aristotle. This tradition explained action and order teleologically, in terms of goods that are somehow prior to individuals' initial desires. This priority was explained ontologically, both by Aristotle and Aquinas. From *After Virtue* onwards, MacIntyre makes sense of this ontological prioritization sociologically. Goods exist prior to individuals' desires because goods are constituted socially and historically, in practices.

The rival tradition understood social order and activity in an instrumentalist way, according to which it is entirely reducible to the present aims and interests of individuals. This tradition began with the Sophists and includes Hobbes. On MacIntyre's account, then, most of those who Arendt counts as opponents of tradition are, rather, proponents of a rival tradition. Their thought does not, as she argued, spring from ever new beginnings but from an historically sustained conceptual scheme.

MacIntyre's mature concept of rival traditions owes little to Heidegger's account of *the* tradition. We have already noted that MacIntyre's concept of his tradition of Thomistic Aristotelianism is premised in the tradition's prior reflection upon itself, and also noted that Heidegger's concept of tradition derives from the same source, but we must add that MacIntyre's idea of *rival* traditions owes more to Marx's critique of ideology. Accordingly, for MacIntyre, traditions represent not just inherited theories but also practical struggles over the control and direction of human activity. Therefore, "debate and conflict as to the best forms of practice have to be debate and conflict between rival institutions and not merely between rival theories" (MacIntyre 1990b, 360). For MacIntyre, Aristotelianism's greatest strength is that its teleological theory represents the rationality of practitioners pursuing shared goods, so that even where its rival enjoys hegemony it is possible for what he calls a prephilosophically Aristotelian

rationality to subsist. Conversely, Aristotelianism's rival draws strength where no line is drawn between morality and manipulation, between goods of excellence and of effectiveness, or between goods internal and external to practices. Here, power and money dominate practice, practitioners are alienated, and norms are compartmentalized. Conflict between these two rival traditions is inevitable. As MacIntyre said in *After Virtue*, "the function of the virtues" is often to enable practitioners to defend their practices. He has often referred since to 'the goods of conflict". Rather than say that resistance to oppression is accompanied by "burdened virtues" (Tessman 2005), he encourages us to appreciate the good in that which we already share, practice and need to defend. In the terms of another recent virtue theorist, he might say that virtue is "being for the good" (Adams 2006).

If one agrees with MacIntyre's proposition that there exists a plurality of philosophical and political traditions, then it is clear that Heidegger does not belong to that which MacIntyre now specifies as Thomistic Aristotelianism. This is clear from Heidegger's project of theoretical deconstruction, but it should also be clear from what I have so far only referred to as his political blunder. Heidegger's enthusiastic participation, as university rector, in National Socialism's totalitarian project of *Gleichschaltung* amply demonstrates the dangers which motivate MacIntyre's differentiation of practices from institutions. Arendt, like Gadamer, famously excused Heidegger's blunder as proof only of the political incompetence of philosophy (a view which even Hennis now shares), but for MacIntyre there is far more to such a mistake. Institutionally, it represents the veritably 'political' incompetence of a centralized state that pretends to substitute for local community. Philosophically, it represents the incompetence of a fundamental ontology of action that is not informed by an understanding of social relations and practices.

The philosophical road down which MacIntyre points differs from that taken by post-Heideggerians in what I have called the particularism of his account of social practices. Aristotle brought Plato's abstractly universalized idea of the good down to earth by mediating between it and individual entities with his account of particular natural kinds, each of which has a specific kind of good to actualize. What MacIntyre does in *After Virtue* is repeat the logic of this exercise with his own account of social practices. In this, he supplements what we might call the tradition's natural ontology (including, now, a Thomistic ontology of natural law) with a social ontology. This ontology, like that elaborated by Aristotle, is teleological. MacIntyre's political argument is that the human good can be actualized through ethically educative pursuit of the good internal to particular practices, and that an Aristotelian politics directs such practices to the common good of a local community.

It is when understood in terms of some social kind and its internal good— such as the practice of painting, or philosophy, or handloom weaving, or family life—that many actions are most intelligible to actors and observers. In the context of such particular social practices, actions are subject to objective standards of judgement in a way condemned by Arendt but commended as moral by MacIntyre. From this veritably teleological perspective, Heidegger and Arendt

require correction, as did Plato. Arendt's 'action' and Heidegger's 'Dasein' are intended to conceptualize an infinity of individual cases but, in consequence, they are formal universals lacking any determinate content. Such content is allowed by MacIntyre's account of social practices. The road down which he points is therefore not one in which theory is conducted in the abstractly universal way condemned by Arendt and practised by Heidegger, and perhaps also practised, in effect, by all post-Heideggerian practical philosophers. Philosophy might progress as an academically institutionalized and compartmentalized practice but, if the world is to be changed for the better rather than merely interpreted, then the pursuit of wisdom has to be understood in the terms of other practices besides. What needs to be revealed is neither being nor action as such; rather, it is the goods internal to our shared practices. These goods are concealed by structures of wealth, status and power, which, in turn, are concealed by legitimatory traditions. In unmasking these structures, it is Marx who has been far more effective than any subsequent German philosopher. Therefore, in answering challenges to Thomistic Aristotelianism, MacIntyre takes inspiration from Marx in theorizing both the sociality of practice and the social effects of theory.

MacIntyre does not suppose that such reflection upon theory requires abandoning past progress. The discovery of truth sometimes comprises the uncovering of institutionalized or theoretical mistakes but, within a fallible tradition that is in good order, truth is best conceptualized as a goal to be progressively actualized. Nonetheless, as Aquinas demonstrated, further progress toward a tradition's final end sometimes requires rethinking its first principles. If MacIntyre's account of the sociality of final ends entails such rethinking, then so be it.

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