"IF MY THESIS IS CORRECT, KANT WAS RIGHT": REVISITING KANT'S ROLE WITHIN MACINTYRE'S CRITIQUE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT

Kelvin Knight

Immanuel Kant concludes his famous essay on enlightenment as an ongoing project of reason by referring to nature's careful unwrapping of "the seed" that is humans' "propensity and calling to *think* freely". Gradually, humans become able to *act* freely. Eventually, their propensity to think freely works "even upon the principles of *government*" (Kant 1996a, 22; Kant's emphases). Enlightenment therefore becomes, also, a *political* project. This essay was immediately followed by another, in which Kant elaborated on its conclusion: "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim", which speculated upon historical purposiveness. Later, in his third and final *Critique*, he elaborated an account of reflective judgement upon apparent purposiveness in nature.

Against what (to anticipate) we might fairly call Kant's teleology of reason and freedom it has been contended that "enlightenment thinking" and "the institutions of society with which it is intertwined, already contains the germ of ... regression" so that beneath "the sun of calculating reason ... the seeds of the new barbarism are germinating" (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, xvi). A "horror of relapsing into barbarism" was identified as "the root of Kantian optimism", growing "from Kant's *Critique* to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*" into Nietzsche's renewal of "Kant's endeavor to transform the divine law into an autonomous principle" of universalizing, legislative *will*, "the secret of [Nietzsche's] Overman" (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, 66–67, 90). So argued Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, having fled German Nazism.

Alasdair MacIntyre's now still more famous critique of Enlightenment thinking about morality is less pessimistic. It shares the crucial concern with what Adorno and Horkheimer called the "intertwinement" of reason and institutionalization whilst rejecting their idea that this intertwinement has the necessity of a "dialectic". "What we are oppressed by is not power, but impotence", he counters (MacIntyre 2007, 75.). Having argued in *Af-*

* Kelvin Knight, k.knight@londonmet.ac.uk, London Metropolitan University

ter Virtue's first half that "the Enlightenment project of justifying morality" (MacIntyre 2007, 36ff., 51ff.) non–teleologically had failed for reasons first forcibly pressed by Nietzsche, he concludes both halves of that book by posing the question of "Nietzsche or Aristotle" (MacIntyre 2007, 109ff., 256ff). What he calls for is a return not to what our post–Kantian critical theorists called "myth" but to what he calls an Aristotelian way of reasoning about practice.

The conclusion to which this essay moves is that the choice we face now is less that between an updated Aristotle and Nietzsche than that of MacIntyre's contemporary Aristotelianism with a revitalized Kantianism. This is not because MacIntyre was mistaken in arguing that Enlightenment philosophers failed to justify the rules of morality non–teleologically; rather, it is because, in the decades since publication of *After Virtue*, the failure of the Enlightenment's project in *moral* philosophy has been compensated for by the renewed success of its *political* project of justifying coercion under law. This success has a source in the success of what was once called "the New Right", and has now been extended through the global system of states that is justified in terms of "human rights" ().[1] Kant is now widely acknowledged as the prescient theorist of this emergent system, in which rational maturity is identified with individuals' responsibility for themselves as possessors of rights under the rule of law.

This conclusion will not be argued for directly in the essay's first three sections, the concern of which is rather to trace the development of MacIntyre's critical understanding of Kant and Kantianism. Their point is to establish why he would resist the current philosophical fashion of trying to accommodate Aristotelian ethics and politics to those of Kant. The essay's final section therefore tries to go some way toward clarifying what is involved in posing the question of Kant *or* Aristotle, and what is involved in answering in terms of the contradiction of liberal ideals by capitalist exploitation and managerial manipulation.

1   Before *After Virtue*

MacIntyre came to philosophy at a bad time for Kantianism. Of course, Kantianism had had a bad time in the previous century, when it had been eclipsed by rival idealisms and by various materialist scientisms. It had then revived in Germany, as neo–Kantianism, and had gained a new force with British idealism, in which it had been allied with both Hegel and Aristotle

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1   For an account of this project, see Charvet & Kaczynska–Nay, 2008, and for its history, see especially Moyn, 2010.

against native empiricism. By the late 1940s, though, that alliance had been broken by two world wars, in which British, French and American philosophers had participated by attacking Hegel's supposed sin of commissioning the state and Kant's supposed sin of omitting rights in prioritizing duty. By midcentury, French philosophers had rejected idealism and Anglo–American ones had posited a modest logic of empiricism and analysis.

MacIntyre has recently recounted that he was then "inoculated ... against Kantianism for the rest of my life" by the dose he received as a Masters student at Manchester (MacIntyre 2010, 63). He had presumably already developed some resistance to Kant through the British Communist Party's orthodox Marxism–Leninism, according to which Kant had been corrected by Hegel who had, in turn, been corrected by Marx. Perhaps still earlier bases for this resistance could be found in experience of Nazism and war, given that when, after Eichmann's notorious appeal in Jerusalem to Kant, he goes on to write *A Short History of Ethics* he concludes the chapter on Kant by suggesting that a consequence of Kantian deontology was Germans' education "into easy conformism with authority" (MacIntyre 1967, 214).

Once inoculated, MacIntyre developed a critique of Kant that he has retained ever since. This critique owed much to Hegel and Marx but also to a Scottish scholarly tradition stretching from the idealist Edward Caird — in this, an argumentative ally of the Oxford idealist T. H. Green — to Norman Kemp Smith, which emphasized how Kant's first *Critique* should be understood as a response to the empiricist scepticism of an earlier Scot, David Hume. "In this country we are accustomed to read Kant in the light of Hume", wrote MacIntyre in 1953, even when commending another, "scholastic approach to Kant" (MacIntyre 1953, 199, 201), some merits of which he could already see but the full rationale of which he could not yet accept.[2]

MacIntyre published his critique of Kant in 1959, in two important but very different papers. One of these papers was published in *The Philosophical Review*, and was the first of his publications to provoke great excitement amongst academic philosophers. In a previous paper he had criticized the idea that "when we judge morally it is at the heart of the matter that we 'do not make exceptions in our own favour' (Kant), that the moral agent must 'depart from his private and particular situation' (Hume)" (MacIntyre 1957, 331). Now, in "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'", he instead sought to free Hume from guilt by epistemological association with Kant's implausible dissociation of moral from factual propositions and, more specifically and significantly, from Kant's dissociation of the rationality of moral judgement

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2   I was unaware of Thomism's early influence upon MacIntyre when I wrote Knight 2007. I attempt to integrate it into a brief account of MacIntyre's development in Knight 2013. MacIntyre summarizes an aspect of that influence in remarking on Vincent McNabb in MacIntyre 2015.

and action from any empirical facts of need and interest or of inclination and desire. That Kant should be understood as a true philosophical progenitor of logical positivists' fact/value distinction MacIntyre had no doubt. It was, after all, a message that had been reinforced by two further, influential Scottish idealists: J.H. Muirhead, who was one of those responsible for bifurcating modern moral philosophy between consequentialism and a Kantian ethics of rules, and H.J. Paton, who, in a translation and influential commentaries in the late 1940s, had identified, for Kant's still–remaining Anglophone audience, an almost exclusive identification of Kantian ethics with the idea of the categorical imperative enunciated in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Against this idea of a "morality of law–and–nothing–else", which MacIntyre historicized as the outcome of the Protestant Reformation, he already opposed the "Thomist" synthesis of "an Aristotelian moral psychology and a Christian view of the moral law". In contrast to what he was to later argue in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, he then presented Hume "as the last representative of [that] older tradition"; "the virtue of Hume's ethics, like that of Aristotle and unlike that of Kant, is that it seeks to preserve morality as something psychologically intelligible" (MacIntyre 1959, 467–8). His critique of any rigorist deontological ethics, such as that most famously and coherently expressed in the *Groundwork*, remains that it is practically impotent because it denies to morality any motivational force, since its impersonal rationality denies to any real person any reason sufficient to move her to action. What is capable of moving people to action is what he calls "desire".

This critique of Kantian ethics as *psychologically* unintelligible was repeated in that now even more famous 1959 essay, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness". In its first half, MacIntyre's target was the Kantesque "moral critic of Stalinism"; in the essay's second half Kant himself made a brief appearance, to separate "the 'ought' of morality ... from the 'is' of desire" and, thereby, to ground and warrant "the liberal belief in the autonomy of morality". This modern belief, which renders morality rationally "unintelligible as a form of human action", MacIntyre already accused of being like belief in "primitive taboos". As later in *After Virtue*, he argued that moral "rules still have point, but men have forgotten what their point is" (MacIntyre 1998a, 41–2). By having "point", he intends something that is both rationalizable *and* capable of motivating action.

It might be thought that MacIntyre was attempting to escape from a Kantian antinomy by a characteristically German route; at once, Kantian, Hegelian, Marxist, and even (in at least one of the movement's guises) neo–Kantian. The antinomy is that of freedom and determinism (Kant 1998, 485–9 (A444/B472–A451/B479)), morality and nature, reasons and causes, the moral ought and anthropological inclination, idealism and empiricism;

indeed, of values versus facts. These opposites he proposed to synthesize by reference to "human nature" (MacIntyre 1998a, 45), which is possible if morality, desire and human nature are all understood as historically changing and changeable. Such historicism is most manifest in Hegel's philosophy of reason's actualization but when MacIntyre wrote it was already beginning to inform anti–Stalinist Marxisms, and it can be traced back to the two essays by Kant with which we began. Along with theology, history became a ground for Kant's "*hope*" that what one can "*know*" might, in some future, combine with what one "*should ... do* (Kant 1998, 677 (A805/B833); Kant's emphases).

MacIntyre was to maintain his own historicism up to and beyond *A Short History of Ethics*. What he could not maintain in that book were his own historicist hopes. Previously, he had followed Marx in hoping that the working class would act as an agent of progress. Perhaps his greatest difference from Hegel has always been his refusal to place his hopes in the modern state, and a difference from Kant has always been that he refuses to present the *Rechsstaat* as even a necessary condition of progress. Unlike Kant, Hegel *and* Marx, he, in *A Short History*, rejected any teleology of human history, arguing that there is a plurality of conceptions of human nature between which (following Kierkegaard and Sartre) we have simply to "choose". As he went on to argue, in differing also from neo–Kantianism, there can be no hope that even history might provide bases for a single science of humanity, since what we are told by the history of science (and especially of physics, which Kant and Kantians have regarded as the paradigmatic science) is that there is a radical plurality of rival scientific paradigms.

Famously, MacIntyre came to acknowledge the epistemological and historical significance of rival scientific paradigms by 1977, the year in which he "began to write the final draft of *After Virtue*" (MacIntyre 1998b, 268). What has often been missed in his most famous publication of that year, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science", is his endorsement of Kant's conception of scientific and "philosophical progress" in enquiry: "Kant is essentially right; the notion of an underlying order — the kind of order that we would expect if the ingenious, unmalicious god of Newton and Einstein had created the universe — is a regulative ideal of physics" (MacIntyre 2006a, 22).

In another 1977 essay, MacIntyre placed his new idea of dramatic narrative within an argument "that Kant's moral philosophy does have more of a teleological framework than is usually recognized, and ... that his teleology is less distorting to moral experience than Aristotle's" (MacIntyre 1977, 38). For Kant, teleology differs from the laws of physics in being only a non–constitutive, *regulative* ideal. His teleological framework becomes apparent when one turns from the *Groundwork* "to the Kant of the second *Critique* and

Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone" (MacIntyre 1977, 31).[3] Here, his approach to moral experience becomes intelligible because his conception of the human good "consists not merely of moral perfection, but of moral perfection crowned with happiness", and because "Kant's conception of moral progress is inseparable from his conception of the radical evil in human nature", since "without radical evil there would be no progress, no journey, for there would be nothing to overcome" (MacIntyre 1977, 32, 34).[4] In those texts, "but also and especially in [Kant's] writings on history, is a crucial metaphor, that of the life of the individual and also of that of the human race as a journey toward a goal". Since this goal may be infinitely remote, "human life is a quest". What MacIntyre now finds "underlying Kant's account of morality" is the "key concept ... of a moral progress" (MacIntyre 1977, 32–4).[5]

This concept of moral progress MacIntyre proposed to radicalize and pluralize, inviting us to "consider the following possibility: that a crucial part of moral progress consists in learning how to transform our notion of moral progress, that the meaning of a particular life does not lie in attaining any particular state of affairs but in the agent's having traversed a course which is part of a larger moral history". It is "such histories [that] present human life as [an] enacted dramatic narrative". Whereas he had previously posed morality as a matter of choice, he now invites us to enquire "of what histories am I a part?", adding that anyone "who knows himself to be part of a moral history whose outcome is as yet unsettled may be less likely to claim prematurely that title of universal moral legislator that Kant bestowed on all rational agents" in the *Groundwork*. Whilst "Kant makes the significance of history depend on the moral progress of individuals", he proposes the reverse — that "the individual only has his moral identity as part of a larger history" (MacIntyre 1977, 39–41). He ends by appealing for "new initiatives in general moral and political theory and in the philosophy of history" (MacIntyre 1977, 43).

MacIntyre now identified Kant's moral philosophy as "a peculiarly significant" episode in "a larger moral history". The Kantian episode followed the fragmentation "of the classical or theistic view of the world", forming

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3   Earlier, MacIntyre had explored Karl Barth's antinomianism as an alternative to Kant's thoroughly rationalistic theology. Later, he presents Søren Kierkegaard's anticipation of Barth as the theological consequence of Kant.

4   MacIntyre's historical example of radical evil was Nazism, in which he seems to implicate not only "German Lutheranism" but even "strict Catholic families" (MacIntyre 1977, 37–8) — but no longer Kant. Much more recently, he has appeared to backdate Kant's exoneration in saying that "the most compelling justification for going to war against the Nazis had derived from what seemed to be Kantian principles, according to which there are certain ways in which no one should ever be treated" (MacIntyre 2009, 115–6).

5   Kant's writings on history had been collected together in Beck 1963.

part of the narrative of an individualist "development of thought ... from rationalists and empiricists through Kant to neoKantianism and empiricism". To this narrative MacIntyre juxtaposed "the development of a quite different type of reaction" to the fragmentation of the classical and theistic view in a tradition founded by Vico and finding "later representatives in thinkers as different as Herder and Hegel", which is based in an anti–individualist philosophy of history (MacIntyre 1977, 41–2).

2   In *After Virtue*

MacIntyre's verdict on Kant in 1977 was that "Kant's thesis that moral obligation necessarily presupposes teleology turns out to be correct; his thesis that teleology necessarily presupposes theology turns out to be incorrect" (MacIntyre 1977, 41).[6] This verdict is what was to separate the argument of *After Virtue* both from Kant and from the preceding critique of modern moral philosophy by Elizabeth Anscombe, with which it has often been compared. What also separates he argument from Kant is MacIntyre's refusal of Kant's separation of a psychological and sociological "anthropology" from what MacIntyre has always regarded as the psychologically unintelligible imperatives of an implausibly "pure" practical reason (to which he had now long added that familiar criticism of the emptiness of the *Groundwork*'s criterion of a maxim's universalization which is standardly attributed to Hegel, and which he illustrated with examples, analytic–style, of the criterion's elasticity). By the time he finally drafted *After Virtue*, however, MacIntyre had come to understand Kant as doing much more than opposing to Hume's moral anthropology an entirely unempirical moral ideal. Indeed, he goes so far as to invoke Kant in arguing that "a moral philosophy ... characteristically presupposes a sociology", and "that we have not yet fully understood the claims of any moral philosophy until we have spelled out what its social embodiment would be". The embodiment of Kant's moral philosophy would be a society in which "each treats the other as an end", offering them "good reasons for acting in one way rather than another, but ... leav[ing] it to them to evaluate those reasons", so that "each rational agent must be his or her own judge". Significantly, despite contending that "it would generally be a decisive refutation of a moral philosophy to show that moral agency on its own account of the matter could never be socially embodied", MacIntyre
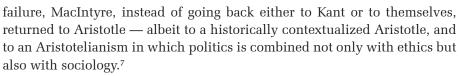
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6   MacIntyre was to admit that "at the time I wrote *After Virtue* I felt that I knew no way of fitting the theological part of the history ... into the overall account without losing the coherence of my narrative", and that "the philosopher whose deepest and highly relevant preoccupations thereby received quite unduly short shrift was of course Kant" (MacIntyre 1983, 448).

175

immediately moves to his famous critique of an emotivist modernity. Had he dwelt a little longer on spelling out the social implications of Kantianism he would, since he points to Kant's "writings on law, history and politics", presumably have added that, even in such a kingdom of ends, individuals' universalizable right to external freedom would be coercively enforced by a constitutional state. Instead, he describes contemporary society as the embodiment of emotivism, in which "others are always means, never ends" and where there is no "genuine distinction between manipulative and non–manipulative social relations" (MacIntyre 2007, 23–4; cf. 46). This is a reality described by Kant's German successors, in Marx's explanation of capitalist exploitation, Weber's account of bureaucratic management (and, we might add, Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of instrumental reason), and Nietzsche's portrayal of the human condition.

MacIntyre's own account of the human condition is one in which the place accorded by Kant to the will is taken by desire. Although he credits Kant with both a teleology and a sociology, he never concedes to Kant a plausible philosophical psychology. Nietzsche was superior to the Enlightenment's "most intellectually powerful protagonist" (MacIntyre 2007, 117) because he refused Kant's separation of will from desire, replacing Kant's egalitarian idea of autonomy with an altogether more elitist individualism of self–determination. MacIntyre's new historicist hope is that Aristotle's philosophical psychology may yet prove superior to that of Nietzsche because of the way in which desire can be understood as subject to a non–Kantian, fully anthropological, sociological and teleological kind of practical reasoning. Therefore, where Kant drew a foundational distinction between what is, what ought to be done, and what might be hoped, MacIntyre draws them together in his "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 the other" (MacIntyre 2007, 53). The task of Aristotelian ethics is to establish, against Hume, Kant *and* Nietzsche, that desire can and should be educated, socially, in identifying and pursuing common goods.

Society, *After Virtue* proposes, is the first place in which to search for a contemporary argument for teleology. Even now, when its author has since recanted the book's express dismissal of metaphysical biology, the naturalism he expounds remains, crucially, that of irreducibly social animals. In this, even if not in his emphasis on our animal embodiedness, he may be understood as retaking some of the steps taken by the neo–Kantianism rejected by Nietzsche (but not entirely by Weber) and Heidegger. Neo–Kantians elided the moral philosophy and moral anthropology that Kant had separated, in their attempt to make a distinctive kind of science out of morality and society, humanity and its history. Their attempt failed. In learning from that

176

failure, MacIntyre, instead of going back either to Kant or to themselves, returned to Aristotle — albeit to a historically contextualized Aristotle, and to an Aristotelianism in which politics is combined not only with ethics but also with sociology.[7]

MacIntyre's is a sociology of particular practices, existing within and across particular communities, and of organizational institutions that differ from practices in being directed not teleologically, to their own specific and "internal" goods, but to such generic and "external" goods as wealth, power and status. The state is only the most powerful of such institutions. He explains Kant's theoretical resort to universalizable, categorical imperatives as the consequence of trying "to understand the virtues outside the context of practices". Goods internal to practices are "the excellences specific to those ... practices which one achieves or fails to achieve" through one's participation in those practices; "excellences our conception of which changes over time as our goals are transformed" by that participation. Such participation educates us into reasons for action that are "neither imperatives of skill nor imperatives of prudence, defined as [Kant] defined them", and are not categorical or unconditional, since they are learned through participative experience (MacIntyre 2007, 273–4).

After Virtue accuses Kant of having "reject[ed] any teleological view of human nature, any view of man as having an essence which defines his true end", even whilst crediting Kant with having recognized "that without a teleological framework the whole project of morality becomes unintelligible" and, therefore, with having presented "as a 'presupposition of pure practical reason'" a "teleological scheme of God, freedom and happiness as the final crown of virtue". Therefore, he acknowledges, "if my thesis is correct, Kant was right" (MacIntyre 2007, 56); if his thesis that moral motivation requires some teleological framework as justification is correct,[8] then Kant was right to try to reconstruct such a framework. Nonetheless, as we have seen, he had already argued that Kant's own "thesis that teleology necessarily presupposes theology" is incorrect, even whilst acknowledging also that there is in Kant's "writings on history ... a crucial metaphor, that of the life of the individual and also of that of the human race as a journey toward a goal" or "a quest", expressed in the "key concept ... of a moral progress". This metaphor resembles the second element in the framework that MacIntyre himself

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7   MacIntyre has recently rebutted the arguments of Emile Perreau–Saussine, Pierre Manent, Sandra Laugier and Vincent Descombes that he *subordinates* Aristotelian politics to modern sociology (MacIntyre 2013, 203–6).

8   From what he has since written of "the ethical demand", and perhaps also of "just generosity", it might seem that MacIntyre has since retreated from this central thesis of *After Virtue*. Insofar as this may be true, he has nonetheless continued to refuse that moral precepts might be adequately justified as categorical imperatives.

proposed in *After Virtue*; that of the narrative unity of a well–ordered life, aiming at happiness as its final crown. Yet even if MacIntyre concurs with Kant in this, *After Virtue*'s framework differs in beginning with practices and concluding with rival traditions of moral enquiry.

MacIntyre's thesis in *After Virtue* is that the intelligibility of moral precepts necessarily presupposes teleology, and that a plausible moral teleology is now based in the sociology of those practices into which we are socialized as plain persons. It is in this way that he grounds his moral theory of practical reason, sociologically, psychologically and anthropologically. So grounded, he argues, morality and teleology escape the Nietzschean critique that he perceives to have deconstructed the Enlightenment project and occasioned the death of modernity's previous truths. So grounded, he escapes the pessimistic dialectic of Adorno and Horkheimer with its "murky intertwinement of property, ownership, control, and management" (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, 172). What might remain insufficiently clear is his critique of Kant, given his haste in moving to his critique of emotivism from his proposition that a moral philosophy would be decisively refuted by demonstrating the impossibility of its social embodiment.

3   Since *After Virtue*

Whose Justice? Which Rationality? is "the successor volume" that MacIntyre promised in *After Virtue* (MacIntyre 2007, 278, 260). The latter "ought to be read as a work in progress", not least because he cut its narrative short of "Kant's ... rejection of Aristotelianism" (MacIntyre 2007, 278). What MacIntyre apparently intended for its successor was "an historicist defence of Aristotle" that still enlisted "both Vico and Hegel" in opposition to any "resuscitation of the Kantian transcendental project" (MacIntyre 2007, 277).

Whilst such transcendentalism may well be considered the greatest target of the successor volume's argument about rival traditions of enquiry, Kant turned out not at all to be that volume's focus. As MacIntyre explained, had it also done "for Kant" and for "the whole Prussian tradition" what it instead did only for Hume and "the Scottish tradition", it "would have become impossibly long" (MacIntyre 1988, 11). What, in an aside, the volume did do for that "Prussian tradition" was extend it into a "Hegel–Green–Putnam view" in which phenomena are connected within a conceptual scheme (MacIntyre 1988, 169) to which epistemic standards are understood to be internal, which MacIntyre judges to be no adequate alternative to Kant's transcendental idealism.

Despite the Scottish context of what is often described as the third volume in a trilogy, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* is more concerned with the legacy of Kant than of Hume. One occasion for this concern is the

178

reappearance of Nietzsche, and another the participation in "encyclopae-dia" of such Kantians as Caird, but the main reason is the influence of Kant upon the revival of Thomistic tradition. This revival coincided with that of Kantianism, and such Thomists as Rosmini and Maréchal borrowed from Kant in attempting to make Thomism relevant to contemporary philosophi-cal issues. Against this temptation to try to synthesize antithetical traditions, MacIntyre insists on the historical uniqueness of Aquinas' achievement. In this resistance to post–Aquinas syncretism we might detect some of the sig-nificance of what MacIntyre now says (and perhaps also of what he does *not* say) of Kant, Kantianism and contemporary Kantians.

What might well remain the nearest that MacIntyre comes to his long–deferred settling of scores with Kantianism is to be found in a later book, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913–1922*. Indeed, it may be fair to assume that such a settling of scores with both Kant and neo–Kantians was a guiding aim in this book. In its fourth chapter he recounts "The Background History" to the phenomenology of Husserl, Reinach and Stein. Running "From Hume to the neo–Kantians", this history is intended to affirm Hus-serl's claim "that Kant's response to Hume rested on a mistake" (MacIntyre 2005, 37).

The very name "phenomenology" might well seem to return philoso-phy to times prior to Kant's neologism "noumena", and all the way back to Aristotle (whence it was taken by Husserl's teacher, Brentano, and by Heidegger), even if Husserl himself was content to go back only so far as Descartes. Nonetheless, in *Edith Stein*, uncharacteristically, MacIntyre dis-regards all such earlier history. In taking Stein as his focus (and perhaps also in looking to Reinach, phenomenology's precocious theorist of law), he indi-cates that it might be possible to reinterpret "phenomenology in Thomistic terms" (MacIntyre 2005, 178). However, he also indicates how phenomenol-ogy can be used, in its own terms, to explore such issues as embodiedness and colour–perception with which he had been trying to deal, in other terms, since *Three Rival Versions*. Husserl helps by enabling "us to identify what is prelinguistic in our experience" (MacIntyre 2005, 22). Husserl does not, like Kant, point us inwards to the will or the spontaneity of reason. Rather, he points us to intentional objects, including those objects of desire that Ar-istotelians call goods. He, and Stein, "sketched a philosophical psychology whose starting–point ... is the experienced contents and objects of a single consciousness, of an 'I' reflecting upon and reporting what is presented to it" (MacIntyre 2005, 116).

Historically, Husserl helped by directing his followers "'To the things themselves!'" (MacIntyre 2005, 22). As MacIntyre hints, this imperative was opposed to the original slogan of neo–Kantianism: "Back to Kant!". In ex-press opposition to that movement, phenomenology posed — as MacIntyre

puts it in the subtitle of his third chapter — "A New Starting–Point in Philosophy". This new starting–point helps MacIntyre to settle scores with that entire tradition of Prussian and German philosophy — Kantian, idealist, Hegelian, and neo–Kantian — which had attempted to deal with the problems posed by empiricism and modern science for philosophy, by asserting the priority of reason to our understanding of our experience of nature. He had long been concerned with that tradition, and with Kant's purported solution in terms of distinct "laws" of nature and of freedom. In 1977 he had hoped to tackle the problem in historicist terms, not entirely dissimilar to those of Wilhelm Dilthey and of the Baden School of Neo–Kantianism, by historicizing science and by looking to the philosophy of history for some broad answer. He restated this hope in *After Virtue*'s 1984 postscript, and the book had indeed recounted a "single history" of *both* "the self and its roles" *and* such moral concepts as managerial expertise, utility, and rights "through which the roles are given expression" (MacIntyre 2007, 35). This, coupled with his sociology of practices, allowed him to withdraw Aristotelianism from any express involvement in metaphysical biology. Since then, however, he has been concerned to retake much of the philosophical ground abandoned in that retreat. Now, phenomenology warrants the claim that the retreat was unnecessary, since what Kant had done in separating moral theory from both empirical and metaphysical anthropology was offer "a solution to a nonexistent problem" (MacIntyre 2005, 40).

On MacIntyre's account, the new starting–point afforded by phenomenology vindicates the perceptual "judgments of plain prephilosophical persons" (MacIntyre 2005, 52). Therefore, he indicates not that contemporary Thomistic Aristotelians should attempt to emulate Aquinas' achievement by synthesizing Aristotelianism with phenomenology but, rather, that they should use phenomenological critique to establish how unnecessary are the epistemological contortions of rival contemporary philosophies, and that, whilst learning particular lessons from Husserl, Reinach and Stein, they should understand the broader function of phenomenology (as perhaps of Wittgenstein, for the analytic tradition) within the history of philosophy to be that of having overcome a problem that was contingent and unnecessary, because purely theoretical and not at all — except in Kant's erroneously asocial sense — practical.

Practically, Kant's moral philosophy *is*, nonetheless, confronted by a real and necessary problem. This is the problem indicated in *After Virtue*'s proposition that a moral philosophy would be refuted by establishing its social impossibility, and by its "critical" and historical argument that *Aufklärung* philosophy had turned out to be institutionalized not in any kingdom of ends but in the altogether darker reality described by Nietzsche and expressed by emotivists. It is a problem to which he has returned in "Some Enlightenment

Projects Reconsidered" (first published in 1995), and in some more recent essays. In the former, MacIntyre enumerates three Enlightenment projects in practical philosophy. The "first", which "is presupposed by the other[s]", is that of distinguishing "between the unenlightened and the enlightened, unenlightened them and enlightened us. Here the canonical text was and is Kant's …. 'What is Enlightenment?'", and the Enlightenment's defining "task" is that "of achieving a condition in which human beings think for themselves". The second project was that specified in *After Virtue*, "of providing a single set of universal moral prescriptions, compelling to all rational individuals", and the third "that of bringing into being and sustaining a set of social, economic and technological institutions designed to achieve the Enlightenment's moral and political goals" (MacIntyre 2006b, 172–4). To these three projects he briefly adds a fourth, in which "the theorists of the European Enlightenment were brilliantly successful": that of exposing "the groundlessness of [the] pretensions of the ruling and owning classes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" and the arbitrariness of their power (MacIntyre 2006c, 172=4). As he has reiterated more recently, his charge is that contemporary institutions fail by the same criteria of rational justification.

MacIntyre insists that his "problem is with the practice of liberalism … not with its ideals. It is with the extent to which the practice of liberalism is a betrayal of its ideals" by "political, financial, and media elites" and the institutions through which they rule (MacIntyre 2013, 202). One such ideal is that which Kant called external and, more specifically "negative" freedom, which MacIntyre happily acknowledges is necessary for such practices as those of the arts and sciences (MacIntyre 2011, 326–7). That which might be regarded as Kant's teleological and historical ideal is the kingdom of ends. As MacIntyre once noted, even Marx sometimes wrote "as though communism will be an embodiment of the Kantian kingdom of ends" (MacIntyre 1967, 214), and he has since followed Christine Korsgaard in again acknowledging the idea (MacIntyre 2006d, 129). His argument has been that, under capitalist and managerial modernity, the treatment of people as means, not ends, is institutionalized and legitimated, notwithstanding liberal bluster about freedom, equality and rights. Liberal theory is therefore ideological, subtly justifying rule by competing elites in the state, as it does in the economy, and thereby legitimating "the large inequality of access to and influence upon political decision–makers … rooted in gross inequalities of money and economic power" (MacIntyre 2008, 263).
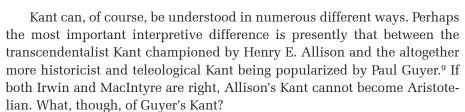
181

4   *Kant Recidivus*

Recently, many leading Aristotelian and Kantian philosophers — and especially ethicists — have attempted to combine the arguments of Aristotle with those of Kant. Such contemporary Aristotelians–cum–Kantians include Korsgaard, Otfried Höffe, Nancy Sherman, and even Allen Wood, amongst many others. Perhaps the greatest of all attempts is that by T.H. Irwin, which has now assumed the monumental form of a three–volume history of *The Development of Ethics*, tracing western moral philosophy from the Socratic age to Rawls. Whereas attempts to join Kantian with Aristotelian ethics usually involve either a disregard or a dismissal of that which separates the two. Irwin's approach is less hasty, in that he accepts that the transcendental idealism famously rejected in Peter Strawson's adaption of Kant for analytic philosophy is an important part of the Kantian scheme. In nonetheless himself also rejecting that transcendentalism as incompatible with what he regards as essential to Kantian ethics, he signifies that what he is attempting is less a synthesis than an apprehension and adaption of Kant for Aristotelianism. His attempt is especially notable because the Aristotelianism that he attempts to combine with Kantianism is of a distinctly Thomistic kind (with no less than nine of its ninety–six chapters devoted to Aquinas). Nonetheless, MacIntyre has not elaborated in print on his suspicion, which expressed long ago but which he presumably continues to hold, that his own Aristotelianism is "at variance with Irwin's" (MacIntyre 1998c, 187); a suspicion attributable, at least in part, to Irwin's early attempt to identify foundational principles for Aristotelianism in a way that might be thought redolent of earlier attempts to construct an ahistorical Thomism.

Irwin's apprehension of Kant is now as historical as it is analytic. In his concern for the historicity of ethics, his Aristotelianism shares something important with MacIntyre. One important way in which their historicisms differ is that Irwin's is an overwhelmingly intellectual and theoretical history, in which the intellectuals with whom he is concerned are as decontextualized from their differing institutional and practical contexts as are those conjured up out of the past by Straussians. Another difference is that the intellectual history which Irwin recounts is that of a unitary progress. It is a progress from Aristotelian foundations, in which Aristotelian arguments are strengthened most notably by Aquinas, but thereafter also by more selective appropriations from Enlightenment philosophers, especially Kant, and also from such Kantian idealists as Green and such analytic Kantians as Rawls. Whilst Aristotelians might be tempted by such a surprising historical triumphalism, they might perhaps also wonder whether what appears to be their appropriation of Kant might not instead turn out to be their appropriation by Kantianism.

182

Kant can, of course, be understood in numerous different ways. Perhaps the most important interpretive difference is presently that between the transcendentalist Kant championed by Henry E. Allison and the altogether more historicist and teleological Kant being popularized by Paul Guyer.[9] If both Irwin and MacIntyre are right, Allison's Kant cannot become Aristotelian. What, though, of Guyer's Kant?

As though echoing what MacIntyre said of Kant's "teleological scheme of God, freedom and happiness", Guyer calls "freedom, immortality, and God the presuppositions of morality" in his own account (Guyer 2014a, 242) of what MacIntyre had called "the Kant of the second *Critique* and *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone*". What Guyer adds is that the concept of progress is written into what might be understood as the architectonic conclusion of Kant's critical philosophy, in Kant's account of our reflective power of teleological judgment, and that what may be judged the teleological progress of humankind is institutionalized by the modern state. Guyer's Kant thus seems like a cosmopolitan and rather untheological Hegel. "Kant's moral philosophy, his aesthetics, and his teleology have all culminated in the claim that we must be able to conceive of our moral goals .... as being realizable in the history of the human species as a whole, rather than in the natural life or supernatural afterlife of individual human beings" (Guyer 2014a, 416).

Guyer's post–Cold War Kant is a more coherent and unapologetic figure than the Kant to whom contemporaries of Marx, Nietzsche and Weber had returned. He might also be thought of as a more philosophically ambitious complement to the practical Kants previously proposed by Rawls and Habermas. Within the academy, he seems now to be outpacing Nietzsche through the work of such scholars as Angela Breitenbach, Alix Cohen, Pauline Kleingeld and Lea Ypi, amongst very many others. Notwithstanding capitalist crises and Islamist resistance, Kant's Enlightenment ideals have been resurgent since *After Virtue*.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre noted that Kant, "as much as ... Hume, discerns no essential natures and no teleological features in the objective universe available for study by physics". This is surely right. From this he inferred that Kant, like other Enlightenment moralists, rejected "*any* teleological view of human nature, *any* view of man as having an essence which defines his true end" (MacIntyre, 2007, 54; emphases added).[10] From the perspective of Guyer's Kant, this inference is too quick. Precisely because Kant had a conception of human history, and also because he had a metaphysically biological conception of the human species, resurgent Kantianism can now reassert

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9   See especially Allison 2004 and Guyer 2014.

10   For an appreciation of "underlying unresolved tensions" between Kant's conceptions of ethics and of teleology, see MacIntyre 2006b 142.

183

a conception of the progressive and increasingly purposive actualization of individual freedom that had been lost to philosophy by the late 1940s, following fascist reaction, Communist conquest, and two world wars. For sure, such liberal reassertion is less brash now than it was for decades up until a century ago, at the height of Western imperialism. Nonetheless, it is unmistakable.

Resurgent Kantianism contrasts with the Kantianism of both the 1900s and 1940s in deemphasizing moral duties and newly emphasizing legal rights. The contemporary Kant is, most importantly, a proponent of the singular right to freedom, as choice. Indeed, this "Kant's conception of freedom [is] as the fundamental principle and *object* of morality" (Guyer 2000, 11; emphasis added). The practical philosophy of this new Kant is a theory of justice, and a theory of justice that provides not only an adequate moral groundwork but also, contra Rawls, an adequate grounding in politics (Guyer 2000, 235–86; Guyer 2014b). His moral imperative remains that of obedience to rules, but the rules that one is enjoined to obey are the impersonal laws made and imposed by the constitutional state. The pluralism of rival traditions is accommodated by prioritizing *The Metaphysics of Morals* over the *Groundwork* and by prioritizing the latter's "Doctrine of Right" over its "Doctrine of Virtue", in a way which renders fully Kantian supplementation of the second *Critique*'s "fact of reason" with a new "fact of reasonable pluralism", so that choice between moral and religious doctrines does not endanger public reasoning about stability or justice.[11] Here, Guyer's Kant is joined by the Kants of, for example, Katrin Flikschuh, Wolfgang Kersting, Reidar Maliks, Thomas Pogge, Arthur Ripstein and the Aristotelian–cum–Kantian Otfried Höffe. Since moral individualism is here overtaken by, even though continuous with, political institutionalism, this Kant finds a close ally in the Hegel revived by the likes of Axel Honneth, Kimberly Hutchings, Frederick Neuhouser and Robert Pippin. For none of these thinkers is the ideal and goal of equal individual freedom under states' law guaranteed, any more than is human perfection guaranteed in Aristotle's teleology. As Guyer says in concluding his most popular presentation of Kant, "nature, through history, can only offer means for us to use for the realization of justice and beyond that virtue and the highest good, and indeed we must be able to conceive of it as offering us such means. But it remains up to us to choose to use them freely and thereby realize our autonomy in all of its dimensions" (Guyer 2014a, 429–30).

If Kant once provided "a rational voice for the emerging social forces of liberal individualism" (MacIntyre 2007, 268), he seems now to be providing the most eloquent philosophical voice for that individualism's institution-

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11   Cf. Rawls 2000, 253–72 (and, for Rawls' account of "the moral psychology of the *Religion*", in addition to his lengthy, Patonian treatment of the *Groundwork*, 2000, 291–328), and Rawls 2005, 440–5.

al universalization and globalization. Even if his transcendental idealism failed, his individualist ideal of a kingdom of ends actualized historically through the progressive and intentional institutionalization of law seems, after all, to have survived Nietzschean critique. "Finality no longer has a theological principle, but rather, theology has a 'final' human foundation", in which "the final relationship between Nature and man is the result of a human practical activity" (Deleuze 1984, 69; emphases omitted). Indeed, contemporary Kantianism's untheological,[12] religiously neutral and politically activist conception of a liberal *telos* of history, in which virtue and the highest good are identified with recognition of the rights of Nietzsche's last man, appears to be gaining in force and appeal, theoretically, institutionally and practically, as even non–western individuals identify themselves as participants within a dramatic liberal narrative of progress toward freedom — even if its real enactors remain states, their personnel, and lawyers, in what might be characterized as an institutionalized will to power. As Kant predicted, military conflict and capitalist commerce seem to have caused politicians and states to actualize individuals' external freedom — even if not at all, in the long run, their material equality. Therefore, if Aristotelians are persuaded by MacIntyre to resist attempts to synthesize Kant and Aristotle, it is imperative that they try to determine how best to answer a *new* question: Kant *or* Aristotle?

To discern how MacIntyre might answer this, on behalf of Aristotle, we may return to his "Some Enlightenment Projects Reconsidered". There, he identified as one of the Enlightenment's projects that of creating and sustaining institutions to achieve its moral and political goals, identifying as the Enlightenment's primary goal Kantian autonomy or "thinking for oneself" (MacIntyre 2006c, 174). Understood in terms other than those of Kantian "spontaneity" or self–legislation, as independent practical reasoning, this is an ideal that MacIntyre shares. He acknowledges that it has "been a central belief of the Enlightenment's modern heirs that such institutions have by now been brought into being in so–called advanced countries and that they do, substantially even if imperfectly, embody the Enlightenment's aspirations, so that those actual institutions ... have a claim to the allegiance of rational individuals". Amongst such institutions are those of "a legal system

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12 Guyer argues that Kant held "that both our virtue and our happiness must be perfected within nature, not someplace else", even whilst making the mighty concession that "that it would be welcome *if* we could find a way to retain Kant's normative moral philosophy ... without taking on *all* of the burden of his reconstruction of teleology as well as of his metaphysics of the will", weighed down as the former is by his theology and the latter by his transcendental idealism (Guyer 2008, 253–4, emphases added). Guyer is influenced by a later literature (especially works by Lewis White Beck and Manfred Kuehn) than was MacIntyre in his understanding of Kant's relation to Hume.

purporting to safeguard the rights which individuals need, if they are to be treated as autonomous, including rights to freedom of expression and enquiry", and those of "a free–market economy". His charge is "that the conjoint workings of these institutions systematically achieved and achieves very different outcomes from those expected by the Enlightenment, by in fact frustrating or undermining ... autonomy" (MacIntyre 2006c, 173). What is therefore required is a quest for institutions that can help people to actualize autonomy by learning from one another, as they do through participation in practices purposively ordered to the actualization of common goods. This, MacIntyre argues against Kant and his successors, must be a search for institutions other than those of the state and its corporate creations. Against the anti–Kantian pessimisms of Nietzsche and of Horkheimer and Adorno MacIntyre perceives grounds for hope in institutions of Thomistic and Aristotelian enquiry, and in all of those practices that "cannot but remain central to human life" and through which "the importance of the virtues is recurrently rediscovered" (MacIntyre 2013, 216–7). Unlike Nietzsche, unlike Kant, and unlike subsequent self–styled critical theorists — but, he insists, like Aristotle and Aristotelianism, rightly understood — MacIntyre considers it a task of philosophy "to enable plain persons to articulate the hitherto unrecognized presuppositions of their actions, so that they become able to criticize those presuppositions and to engage in critical and self critical deliberation with others" within their non–universal, always–particular practices and communities (MacIntyre 2013, 207).

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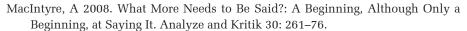
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Abstract

"IF MY THESIS IS CORRECT, KANT WAS RIGHT": REVISITING KANT'S ROLE WITHIN MACINTYRE'S CRITIQUE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT

Although Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* is famous for its critique of the Enlightenment project in moral theory, and although Immanuel Kant is usually considered the greatest protagonist of that project, Kant's role within the argument of *After Virtue* is far less clear than one might presume. After exploring Kant's role within MacIntyre's work — before, within and since *After Virtue* — this paper will argue that the greatest alternative to Aristotle in contemporary philosophy, ethics and politics is no longer Nietzsche, as *After Virtue* proposed, but Kant. Kant's representation by such contemporary Kantians as Paul Guyer is of a figure who presciently anticipated developments in philosophy and politics and has withstood deconstruction by Nietzscheans. Therefore, contemporary Aristotelians still need to find some way to come to terms with Kant's version of the Enlightenment project and of liberalism — and, indeed, with liberal institutions as justified in Kantian terms.

KEYWORDS: Aristotelianism, Guyer, institutions, Kant, Kantianism, MacIntyre, practices, progress, rights, teleology.