

THE FLOURISHING LIFE
AND THE GOOD LIFE: A
CRITIQUE OF ALASDAIR
MACINTYRE'S VIRTUE
ETHICS FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF
THEOLOGICAL
VOLUNTARISM

by

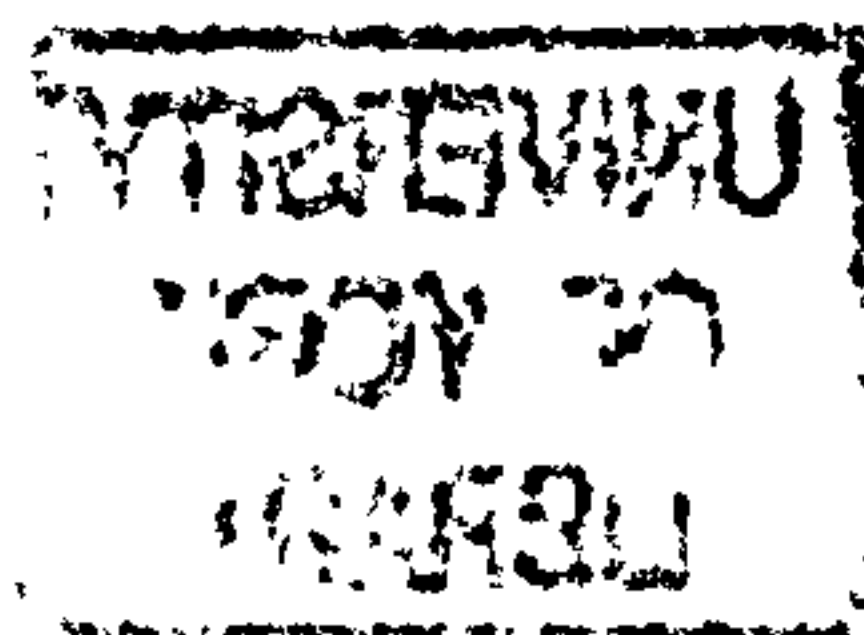
Kelly Alvin Madden

PhD

University of York

Department of Politics

June, 2006



ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on the Aristotelian argumentation of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* project. I ask why a Thomist natural lawyer might put forward an Aristotelian account of morality without an explicit theological standpoint. I posit assumptions to the effect that God's purposes for humanoids are necessarily realized in humanoid flourishing. I deny these assumptions. I counter with a Scotist claim that the good life is morally distinct from the flourishing life.

In Part One I argue for the necessity of an unambiguous position in theology/metaphysics for an adequate account of the virtues. I argue against the claim that genuine virtues are necessary to sustain MacIntyrean "practices." Virtues are defined with respect to goods. The goods of practices are ranked relative to exclusive conceptions of the good life. Practices do not transcend traditions. Virtues are not transferable to rival conceptions of the good life. Practices are therefore insufficient to identify genuine virtues. An exclusive conception of the good life is therefore necessary to an adequate account of the virtues.

The three-part Aristotelian structure of morality connotes a framework transcending our conception of the good life. MacIntyre supplies neither that framework, nor an unambiguous answer as to whether there *is* indeed a final end of human existence independent of human will, nor therefore an adequate conception of the human *telos*. He famously concludes *After Virtue* with the choice between Aristotle and Nietzsche. His refusal to take a stand on cosmological first principles seems to concede the confrontation to Nietzsche, by forfeit.

Part Two presents a reduction theory of theological voluntarism with respect to the biblical God Almighty. MacIntyre has often opposed any such theory. I trace the abandonment of Aristotelianism in the natural sciences to theological voluntarism and argue that for one of the same reasons leading to its abandonment, we should not take humanoid flourishing as a metaphysical necessity: the attempt to discern necessary final ends in nature is misguided. I argue for divine creative and legislative freedom in establishing human ends short of our ultimate end. The only strict dictate of natural law concerns the divine nature, as greatest good. Drawing on MacIntyrean argumentation, I deny the possibility of reasoning concerning the just authority of purported divine commands on bases independent of beliefs surrounding the purported deities giving those commands. God Almighty's authority with respect to humanoid ends is theoretical with respect to our ultimate end (union with God), but practical with respect to any logically possible means to reach that end. Moreover, the structure of the human will permits us to will in accordance with this distinction, to will justice (God's will concerning the means to our ultimate end) over what fits our nature (our flourishing).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Preface	5
Part One: FLOURISHING AND THE GOOD	7
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Chapter 2: Aristotle Abandoned.....	20
The failure of the Enlightenment project	20
The problem with Aristotle's metaphysical biology	25
Chapter 3: Virtues and Practices	39
Definition of a practice.....	40
Virtuously circular: the necessity of the virtues	45
Genuine virtues or semblances?	52
Simulacra in individuals.....	56
Simulacra in society	60
Chapter 4: The Goods of Practices and the Good Life.....	64
The ultimate, not-necessarily-monolithic good.....	67
Practices: individuated by goods and excellences.....	70
Goods and the ends they serve	73
The products of medicine as goods	75
The life-of-a-practitioner as a good.....	81
Good doctor, good human?	83
Schmoctoring and rival practices of doctoring.....	90
Chapter 5: Virtues and the Good Life	96
The virtues of practices and ends beyond practices	97
Virtues shaped by the conception of the good life	101
The virtues of the good life as the virtues of practices.....	105
Virtues non-transferable	109
Truthfulness and the good life.....	112
Slavery in the South	116
Anselm and the debt of rightness to truth.....	125
Chapter 6: <i>Telos</i> and Transcendence.....	133
The narrative unity of a life and a communal tradition.....	134
The frame of reference transcending the three-part structure	138
The problem with happiness.....	150
Parasites and predators	152
Nietzsche and transcendence.....	155
Part Two: A THEORY OF THEOLOGICAL VOLUNTARISM	164
Chapter 7: Natural Law and Theological Voluntarism	165
Review and preview	165
A typological illustration.....	168
Introduction to the chapter	171
In what sense is God good?.....	174
Classical and biblical understandings of divine will.....	178
Classical and biblical understandings of origins	186
Are there limits to what God can rationally and justly legislate?	190
Are omnipotence and evil compatible concepts?	195
Applicability to MacIntyrean natural law	199
Chapter 8: Authority in Theological Voluntarism	203

MacIntyre on “just authority”	206
Belief and justice	212
Authority, practical and theoretical	217
Authority, roles, and ends.....	223
Authority and the actualization of reasons	224
Divine authority, practical and theoretical	226
Divine authority and objections to salient coordination.....	229
Chapter 9: Theological Voluntarism and the Virtues.....	236
Motivational distinctions.....	237
Augustine on human will and morality	240
Human will in Aquinas and Scotus	243
Scotus’ account of the two inclinations in the will	250
The importance of the two inclinations in the will.....	252
<i>Eudaimonia</i> or justice.....	254
The pursuit of justice.....	256
Objections.....	259
A problem for the eudaimonist conception of the will.....	262
Written on the heart.....	268
Practical differences	273
Chapter 10: The Nature of Moral Obligation.....	280
Three questions.....	284
Which moral statuses are dependent on divine acts?	285
On which divine acts is obligation dependent?	286
What is the relation of dependence?.....	287
Objections to reduction TV	292
Conclusion.....	296
Bibliography.....	299
Index.....	317

PREFACE

All references in parenthesis without author or date—for example: (123)—refer to Alasdair MacIntyre (1981/1984) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).

NE. Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle. Sectional references are listed after the citation of the modern translation.

ST. Summa Theologica by Thomas Aquinas. All references to the *Summa* are Dominican Fathers translation listed in the bibliography. The format of the citation is Part, Question, Article. For example, *ST* 1-2.91.1 refers to Part One of the Second Part, Question 91, Article 1.

Throughout the thesis I have attempted to follow the following guidelines with respect to gender in personal pronouns. Where an author uses one gender in his/her writing, I tend to follow suite in reference to his/her argument. In my own account, I either alternate, roughly, or use both genders for the sake of clarity. With respect to the Godhead, I resort to the admittedly awkward avoidance of personal pronouns. The biblical language clearly favors the masculine. So do most of the authors cited. But there is no short explanation of this usage to a modern readership that does justice to the Ancient Near Eastern horrors of goddess worship, yet also to the scriptural references to God as mother and helpmeet, or to the *imago Dei* as both sexes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Susan Mendus was an unfailingly encouraging, patient, instructive, and available mentor for this project. Despite elemental differences concerning the ends of life, she selflessly attended to my best interests. Malcolm Reid gave me early advice. Tim Stanton helped me clarify numerous points in the Thomist/Scotist debate. John Hare personally provided key insights into Scotus on two occasions. Matt Matravers and Bob Dyson gave excellent help in the form of critique and correction. Bill Harper and Tim Sherratt offered me the opportunity to teach these ideas. This thesis represents my acknowledgement of my debt to Alasdair MacIntyre for the contribution of his work to my grasp of the issues discussed here.

Andrea Madden gave me the love, time, and emotional support without which this would not have been possible. Kathryn and Alex bore patiently with me. Mike Constantz, Alan Nagel, and Henry Tan provided essential encouragement, time, and protection. Stephen Smith was a spiritual burden-bearer and cheerleader. Above all, I thank my Creator and Redeemer.

(But don't blame any of them.)

Part One

FLOURISHING AND THE GOOD

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary field of moral philosophy, few thinkers have had the productivity and historical reach of Alasdair MacIntyre. Moreover, he addresses essential questions, and conscientiously attempts to be accessible to non-professionals. His thought is important. It is with neophytic boldness that my project takes MacIntyre, in *After Virtue* and its sequels, as a dialogue partner concerning the nature of moral obligation.

MacIntyre declares not only that modern moral philosophy has failed, but that it *had* to fail, given the framework of the approach that the Enlightenment had set for itself. The claims of *After Virtue* (1981/1984) are roughly as follows (condensed from MacIntyre 1998, pp. 69-72):

The modern socio-cultural context is characterized by irresolvable disagreements over issues such as abortion, war, and property rights. In public debate nowadays, arguments originally based in early liberalism, medieval natural law, and utilitarianism clash with each other. Without their original social and conceptual context, the arguments traceable to each theory have become little more than expressions of attitudes and feelings. This predicament is largely due to the failure of “the Enlightenment project,” the attempt by the luminaries of the modern age to formulate an account of morality to which all rational persons must necessarily give assent. This failure has led to a crisis in belief in reason and therefore to the resort to emotivism. Moral concepts have been reduced to “useful fictions” such as human rights and utility. Because these have lost their rational justification as concepts, their use in social relations is merely

manipulative. It is Nietzsche who has best understood the deception and self-deception inherent to moral accounting in this context.

Despite Nietzsche's insights, however, his story of this development is defective. MacIntyre locates the fateful wrong turn not in Aristotle's philosophy, but in its abandonment, and particularly in the truncation of Aristotle's three-part structure of practical rationality. This structure sees the development of human nature as the transition from its uneducated state, by means of rules of morality, to the actualization of human nature's *telos* or full potential in the good life. To salvage moral philosophy is to return to Aristotle and to a common vision of the good life. So in the final analysis, our choice is between Aristotle and Nietzsche. While the abandonment of Aristotelianism is intelligible, MacIntyre says, it is unwarranted. Rightly understood, Aristotelianism can both withstand Nietzsche's assault and also enable us to understand our present condition.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre builds a neo-Aristotelian moral teleology in three stages.¹ He begins by arguing that a core of three virtues is required to attain the goods internal to what he calls *practices*—courage, honesty, and justice. These core virtues and others are also required for realizing the *narrative unity of a life*, and for the maintenance of a *communal tradition*. We might expect him to claim that this socially sustained understanding of virtue is itself reflective of a meta-teleology or of the will of God. We would be wrong. He stops there. His return to Aristotle's structure is explicitly *not* a return to Aristotle's metaphysical biology.

I say that MacIntyre has not, finally, redressed the failure of modern moral philosophy, because he has not offered an adequate replacement for Aristotle's metaphysical biology. His negative argument is damning, and much of his positive argument I find compelling, as far

¹ The reader should note that there are three sets of "threes" to be distinguished in MacIntyre's argument—the three-part structure of Aristotelianism, the three stages of MacIntyre's account of the virtues, and the three virtues that he emphasizes in that account.

as it goes. It does not go far enough. MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian account of morality cannot succeed without theology.

Considered only from within the perspective of human life, no end of human life, including the end of human flourishing, can serve as the *ultimate* end of human life in an Aristotelian account of morality. An adequate account of the type that Aristotle systematized is possible only if human flourishing is an important good from a frame of reference transcending the interests of human life.

The claim to an objective, supra-human conception of the good presents a question to our understanding of the moral agent. A conception of the good can only be the object of practical rationality if it can be perceived as "good" to humans. Can humans rationally will goods that rise above, or even limit, their own flourishing? I say that they can. Aristotelianism sees no need for a distinction between the flourishing life and the good life. Recently, in *Dependent Rational Animals*, MacIntyre claims that the meaning of "flourishing" for gorillas, dolphins, or humans is not an analogical but a univocal predication.

What it is to flourish is not of course the same for dolphins as it is for gorillas or for humans but it is one and the same concept of flourishing that finds application to members of different animal-and plant-species.... And what it needs to flourish is *to develop the distinctive powers that it possesses qua member of that species*. [All emphases added]

And the concept of flourishing in this respect resembles other concepts that involve applications of the more fundamental concept of good ('to flourish' translates *eu zen* and *bene vivere*). (1999, pp. 64-65)

I will contend that these *distinctive powers* transcend not just the will to biological flourishing, as Aquinas and MacIntyre recognize, but also the will to human flourishing as an end. We can will *the good*.²

John Duns Scotus makes the case for this position, developing Anselm's earlier insights into it. For MacIntyre, however, Duns Scotus and his heirs (Pascal, Luther, Calvin and *their* heirs) are responsible for our current debacle, at least in seminal form. They have hijacked the Aristotelian tradition, passing on a wrecked vehicle that was finally abandoned in the Enlightenment.

I can only offer here the beginnings of a reply to this accusation. Even that will only be in the course of formulating my own account of morality. My account runs counter to non-biblical cosmologies, on the one hand. Contra MacIntyre, it sees Scotus as a step forward in the development of an explanation of objective morality and of the will, on the other hand. I develop recent research into Duns Scotus by John E. Hare and Thomas Williams in order to argue against the eudaimonism of Aristotle and Aquinas. I join this with a corresponding Scotist difference in practical rationality. I reject both the Aristotelian grounding of morality in human nature and also its conception of the will directed only to *our* good. I propose a structure of morality anchored in the nature and will of God, and asserting the freedom of the human will to will *the good*.

So much for where I'm going. Now, how will I get there?

The structure of my argument is, negatively in Part One, to follow the stages of MacIntyre's inductive approach "upward" or "outward" to an ever-larger and ultimately comprehensive frame of reference, so as to demonstrate the inadequacy of this account. My principal

² Throughout this argument I will assume that the full realization of human powers is possible by God's gracious intervention and *only* by God's gracious intervention, in ways that are not central to my thesis.

disagreement with MacIntyre concerns the degree to which his account can succeed without asserting a basis for thinking that there *is* an objective good that is independent of human will and well-being. Secondly and positively in Part Two, I argue for the validity of my version of theological voluntarism deductively “downward” from concepts about God toward norms of behavior in particular circumstances. Chapters 2 and 10 present a comprehensive summary of MacIntyre’s eudaimonistic theory and of my voluntarist theory, respectively. Chapters 3 through 5 and 8 through 9 emphasize the teleological nature of the virtues in all theories of the virtues (Part One) and in theological voluntarism in particular (Part Two). Chapters 6 and 7 respectively point to the need for, and then offer, an account of *the* good and the good life. The role of the will is central to both subjective and objective morality. The thesis is therefore roughly chiasmic in structure.

In Part One, chapters 2 through 6, I follow the structure and sequence of MacIntyre’s positive argument, from practices to the narrative unity of a life to a tradition. This is a multi-chapter demonstration that there can be no Aristotelian account of “the virtues of the good life” independent of a particular and exclusive conception of the good. Virtues are most accurately defined in terms of the ends they serve. Social goods as ends can only be realized through dispositions that make those goods possible. Differences in virtues therefore necessarily follow from differences in ends. The dispositions that enable the realization of one end, however, will be simulacra of dispositions that enable the realization of an end contrary to that end, and vice versa. Genuine virtues are those directed toward the *right* ends and specifically to the right ends for the sake of the *ultimate* end, whatever that end might be.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre rejects the metaphysical biology of Aristotle (and of Aquinas, by extension). What then is good and how do we recognize it? MacIntyre thinks that we recognize goods in relationship to our nature. We progressively discover what fulfills our

nature via excellences of many sorts. We can discern the essence of our nature in the realized potentialities of human functions.

Chapter 2, "Aristotle Abandoned," begins with a summary of MacIntyre's argument, especially the failure of the Enlightenment project in Hume, Kant, and Kierkegaard and his plan to reestablish morality with respect to function, along Aristotelian lines, but without metaphysical biology. I explain what is usually seen as objectionable about metaphysical biology, its metaphysics. Aristotle's account, I say, is irreducibly metaphysical. I suggest possible presuppositions explaining why a Thomist might think that reference to God is unnecessary in an account of morality. These presuppositions include the assumption that there is a necessary positive relationship between flourishing and *the* good, an assumption leading to a conflation of the flourishing life and the good life.

In chapter 3, "Virtues and Practices," I consider MacIntyre's central claim that genuine virtues are required to attain the goods internal to "practices." The virtues are circularly defined, defined as those qualities necessary to attain the goods of practices. Social goods can only be realized through dispositions that make those goods possible. In itself this is not a problem. It presents a problem for his conclusion that genuine virtues are required to sustain practices, however, since genuine virtues are qualities that obtain beyond the scope of practices. If these dispositions do *not* necessarily obtain beyond a practice, then it follows that it is *not* genuine virtues that are sustaining that practice, but some sort of simulacra of the virtues instead. So practices are too narrow in scope to identify genuine virtues. I argue that even if the virtues turn out to be genuine on one conception of the good life, practices can be sustained by what rival conceptions can only consider simulacra. Identification of the virtues requires the other two stages of his argument at least.

In making this case, chapter 4, "The Goods of Practices and the Good Life," argues that without some conception of the good life, we cannot

answer critical questions concerning the goods internal to practices. And because it is these goods that define and individuate practices, we cannot even identify a practice adequately without reference to exclusive conceptions of the good life. That implies that medicine for Muslims and Confucians, for example, is therefore strictly speaking different practices, despite similarities, and this turns out to be the case. It is the relationship of the goods of practices to the good life that determines why the goods of practices are legitimate goods: they contribute to the good life. I emphasize the relationship between a good human being and a good practitioner.

This fourth chapter continues to formulate my disagreement with MacIntyre's claim that there is a core content to the virtues that can be identified independently of exclusive understandings of the good life. This disagreement becomes sharper in my fifth chapter, "Virtues and the Good Life." Chapter 5 begins with a section bridging from the previous chapter and considering the virtues associated with different practices of medicine in rival traditions.

I examine one attempt by medical ethicists to outline an ethic of medicine from an explicitly MacIntyrean understanding of medicine as a "practice." This attempt fails, because it explicitly avoids the question of identifying the good life. What we see is that on the Confucian understanding of the practice of medicine, for counterexample, the virtues of medicine *just are* the virtues of Confucianism. As a result, virtues cannot be "transferred" from one conception of the good to another. Against MacIntyre's position in *After Virtue* on this question, I give reasons why a reformed "courageous Nazi," for instance, could not without comprehensive reform carry into another conception of the good life what he has learned about courage in Nazism *qua* Nazism. It is the exclusive particularity of the ends of the Nazi life that make it questionable that a Nazi's courage will carry successfully into a rival conception of the good life without extensive "interference."

I consider another of MacIntyre's central virtues, truthfulness. Given the practical necessity of truthfulness even for communication, how much variation could there then be in truthfulness by social conception of the good? Surprisingly, some social systems *require* lying and deception. I finish the chapter with Anselm's theory of "doing the truth." This theory draws a functional distinction between the natural and contingent senses in which moral behavior is true or good, a distinction to which I will return in Part Two.

MacIntyre's positive argument is a return to the Aristotelian three-part framework of human-nature-as-it-is, rules of behavior and the virtues, and human-nature-as-it-can-be-if-it-realizes-its-essential-nature. In chapter 6, "*Telos* and Transcendence," I review the second and third stages of his argument, the narrative unity of a life and a communal tradition. I argue that here also, the conception of the good life is determinative of these goods and of the virtues necessary to realize them. These goods are subordinate to *the* good.

Aristotle's account of the virtues is tied to the human good as partly constitutive of *the* good. MacIntyre does not substantively define the ultimate end, but rather only the penultimate end, human flourishing, or "the good life for man" in the context of a tradition. Unless the human good is coterminous with a specific understanding of the ultimate good, the human good is inadequate as an end of the virtues. Without Aristotelian metaphysics, why should we assume that any particular conception of human flourishing is coordinate with the ultimate good?

My argument to this point emphasizes the nature of virtues as even more thoroughly teleological than MacIntyre might be interpreted as saying. Genuine virtues are those directed toward the *right* ends and specifically to the right ends for the sake of the *ultimate* end, whatever that end might be. We cannot maximize every good. So how do we rank them? Only from a larger frame of reference can inevitable conflicts be resolved. I point out simply that the three-part Aristotelian

framework entails a vantage point that transcends that three-part framework. MacIntyre does not supply that transcending vantage point or that *telos*. MacIntyre's account posits human functions and thereby some version of morality in virtue of these functions. He has not told us what humans collectively are good *for*. Is there a basis independent of convention for thinking that humans are good *for* anything? Do we have a determinate final end requiring the virtues? MacIntyre does not present a complete account of practical rationality.

It might be objected that in *After Virtue*, MacIntyre is arguing only for the *formal* necessity of a conception of the good, not for any particular and substantive conception of the good. This objection misses my point. I am asking why we should think that there *is* such an end. Without Aristotle/Aquinas' metaphysics, why should we think that there *is* a good independent of human will, and that MacIntyre's account is not, all told, merely a species of preference-satisfaction or consequentialism? Is there or is there not a human function that transcends social constructions?

MacIntyre is arguing for a teleological ethics without an adequate *telos*. We are asked to choose between Aristotle and Nietzsche, yet without an ultimate perspective that excludes Nietzsche. Without such a meta-teleology, and in a forced choice between Aristotle and Nietzsche, the premises point to Nietzsche.

My negative conclusion is *not* that there can be no rational account of morality without God. MacIntyre's argument demonstrates powerfully that morality of some sort is rational without positing God. It will not be a Christian morality, of course. Even in quotidian questions, at best it will only be a simulacrum thereof. My conclusion concerning his argument is rather that this will be a morality without a basis independent of human will. Even if the resulting account is not Nietzschean, it will have no basis from which it can *oppose* a Nietzschean assertion of will.

Is there an adequate alternative to Aristotle's final causation? Can human agents will other than their own flourishing for its own sake?

Part Two favorably contrasts one form of theological voluntarism with eudaimonistic theories, including MacIntyre's. My version of theological voluntarism is developed from a Christian, specifically a Reformed, perspective. MacIntyre's arguments for his version of natural law theory are occasionally and sometimes explicitly opposed to theological voluntarism of the sort I propose. Theological voluntarism revolves around the claim that something is right because God intends or commands it. It does not consider the question of God's existence, though it is my position that the God of the biblical narrative does exist.

Chapter 7, "Natural Law and Theological Voluntarism," continues the line of argument that I began in chapter 6. I question the anthropocentric orientation of natural law arguments such as MacIntyre's. One moral implication of an *ex nihilo* creation is that God is not constrained by any pattern or generalization of a recurrent fact/event in pre-existent matter. Since the only pre-existent norm is God's nature, the purpose of any created thing is only whatever intention God has for it. Following John Duns Scotus, I claim that the only strict dictate of natural law, therefore, concerns the *divine* nature, as greatest good. Human flourishing (on its own terms) is only constitutively related to the good life because God has freely, not necessarily, placed a high rank on human flourishing as a good.

I show that doubts concerning our ability to know final causes in natural science *follow*, historically and logically, from the Scotist shift in theology and morality. The now-evident limitations of the Aristotelian model for the natural sciences, and the fruitfulness of the empirical model that replaced it, suggest that Aristotelian arguments concerning necessary final causes for human life are also deficient. A eudaimonistic conception of flourishing, at least as it is usually formulated, is not a metaphysically necessary or an eternally

immutable end of human life to which we are directed in practical rationality. I identify that end instead with respect to the goodness and will of God.

The relationship between natural law theory and theological voluntarism has close parallels with the relationship between “good” in the functional and role-determined sense described by MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian ethics, and “good” in the sense of the biblical affirmation, “God is good.” “God is good” is true tautologically; the notion of an evil omnipotent being is conceptually incoherent.

Chapter 8, “Authority and Theological Voluntarism,” explains the relationship between personal authority and personal recognition of authority. I follow G.E.M. Anscombe’s (1990) theory of authority, the right to rule, as a right derived from what is necessary to the fulfillment of a function. Continuing, I show that in the fulfillment of a role, a practical authority actualizes decisive reasons for action through communicated intentions. By creating previously nonexistent goods, an authority can be *both* theoretical and practical with regard to the same reason for action. God’s authority over rational creatures is a function of God’s control over the means by which they are unified with the goodness of God. Subsequently, God is also a theoretical authority concerning those means. Within this framework I respond to objections to *divine* practical authority that are based in objections to salient coordination theories of *political* authority.

Chapter 9, “Theological Voluntarism and the Virtues,” outlines the structure of morality in the moral agent. Following on my earlier demonstrations of the differences between accounts of virtues because of the contrary ends served, I note the difference between dispositions motivated by pursuit of flourishing and those motivated by the pursuit of the ultimate good. I trace the shift in the theory of the will from Aquinas to Scotus, corresponding to a shift in understanding of logically possible human ends, and present arguments in favor of the shift. I finish with some broad practical differences from theological

eudaimonism derived from my theory. In the absence of knowledge concerning these intentions, humans have a “default setting” of practical rationality in pursuit of the good they discern in conceptions of human flourishing. This confirms much of MacIntyre’s theory, though as conclusions contingent on the ranking of human flourishing as a good.

Chapter 10, “The Nature of Moral Obligation,” gives more specificity to my positive argument by showing that, within the parameters of natural law with respect to God’s nature, obligation depends on divine communicated intentions. All human obligations other than those stipulating love of God’s basic goodness are dependent on divine acts. The nature of this relationship is one of reduction. The concept of obligation is dispensable in favor of divine communicated intentions.

ARISTOTLE ABANDONED

The responsibility for the impasse of modern moral philosophy lies squarely at the feet of those in the post-Reformation era who abandoned the Aristotelian structure of practical rationality in moral reasoning. This is the central negative argument of *After Virtue*. The only way around the impasse, MacIntyre says positively, involves returning to the structure of Aristotelian argument, though without Aristotle's metaphysical biology. I question whether the resultant account can be successful, since Aristotle's ethics depend on the metaphysical component of his conception. The structure of Aristotle's Aristotelianism is irreducibly metaphysical. I offer an explanation of why a Thomist might assume that reference to God is unnecessary in an account of morality, assumptions resulting in a conflation of the flourishing life and the good life. This explanation will foreshadow reasons given in subsequent chapters for thinking that MacIntyre's argument cannot succeed without staking out a positive position in theology or metaphysics.

In order to understand Alasdair MacIntyre's positive argument, as well as the objections to it and my positive argument, we have to understand the abandonment of Aristotle's three-part structure of morality. Hume, Kant, and Kierkegaard fail especially in the attempt to justify morality without the third part of this structure, human nature in its full flourishing and development as the *telos* of human life.

The failure of the Enlightenment project

To understand the failure of the Enlightenment project, says MacIntyre (36-50),³ we must contrast it with what went before. In

³ References to page numbers *only* refer to *After Virtue* (MacIntyre 1984).

modern usage, “moral” has come to refer to an increasingly narrow area of life, cut off from the rest. In medieval society there was no conceptual scheme for separating the moral from the practical as we do in the modern world. There is not even a word in Latin for “moral” as moderns use it, MacIntyre tells us. The term *moralis* concerned the character and dispositions of a person. In early use, “moral” is a noun and relates to the practical use of the lesson taught in a piece of literature (“the moral” of the story), and does not contrast with “prudential” or “self-interested” or “legal” or “religious.” The term is actually closest in meaning to our “practical.” (38f.)

To locate the sources of this development, MacIntyre strides through the history of philosophy, through the efforts of Hume, Kant, and Kierkegaard to find a rational basis for traditional ethical notions without a given understanding of the ends of human life and without presupposing what it means to be a finished person. MacIntyre shows why the task is impossible. In each case it is because the attempted account tries to develop ethical mandates with reference only to uneducated human nature.

Hume seeks to demonstrate that the satisfaction of our passions dictates an ethical rule of life. His argument does not succeed, simply because in their uneducated state, our desires are contradictory. Moreover, these desires do not of themselves provide a basis for ethical rules by which to reconcile or order these internal contradictions.

Kant endeavors to build a case for conventional moral norms from supposedly universal principles of reason. These universal principles, however, do not necessarily yield the norms which he wishes to derive, and may indeed produce norms both trivial (e.g., “Always eat mussels on Mondays in March.”) and morally repugnant. (“Persecute all those who hold false religious beliefs.”)

Finding the approaches of Hume and Kant unsuccessful, Kierkegaard simply abandons the attempts to ground morality and proposes the acceptance of ethical norms for no reason at all. Yet he insists that they are still binding. This cannot stand, says MacIntyre, because the authority of a decision comes from the reasons for a choice: “This is the right course of action because....” If my reasons are sound, then my choice is also sound. If my reasons are not sound, then neither is my choice. If we choose this or that ethical principle *for no reason*, following the model of *Enten-Eller*, such a “principle” cannot have any authority over us, despite Kierkegaard’s contention that it does. For authority is bound to reason.

So the arguments of these three giants of the Enlightenment fail. But not only do they fail as positive accounts, they negate each other. MacIntyre pits each of the accounts of Hume, Kant, and Kierkegaard against the others. While the positive arguments of each fail, this failure is due to the success of their rivals’ negative arguments. For different reasons, the negative argument of each effectively undermines the positive arguments of the other two. MacIntyre then proceeds to show not only that their arguments *did* fail, but that the quest of Enlightenment *had* to fail, given the task its representatives had set for themselves.

In spite of their differences, Hume, Kant, Kierkegaard and company all agree on what a rational justification of ethical behavior would be. They share in the project of “constructing valid arguments which will move from premises concerning human nature as they understand it to be to conclusions about the authority of moral rules and precepts.” (52) He dismisses utilitarian teleology as a substitute for Aristotelian teleology, since it is incapable of motivating morality from an understanding of pleasure.

It is MacIntyre’s argument that this two-part schema of the Enlightenment project—(1) uneducated human nature as the basis for (2) the rules of morality—*cannot* succeed without a shared

understanding of *educated* human nature, the third part in the Aristotelian structure. We can only understand the rules of ethics as necessary when we understand the contrast between “man-as-he-happens-to-be” and “man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature.” Morality is the necessary, rational link between the two. It is a scheme in which each part of the scheme necessarily implies the other two. It entails an account of potentiality and act, an account of man’s rational essence, and especially an account of human teleology. In a theistic belief structure, he says, this scheme is supplemented but not changed. (53)

In an earlier work, MacIntyre lays the blame for the departure from this formula squarely with Protestantism. (1966, pp. 121-127) And even in *After Virtue* he says that according to the Protestantism of the Reformation and Jansenist Catholicism, reason can provide “no genuine comprehension of man’s true end; that power of reason was destroyed by the fall of man.” In the end, the contrast between uneducated and completed human nature remains and divine moral law “is still a schoolmaster to remove us from the former state to the latter, even if only grace enables us to respond to and obey its precepts.” (53f) Yet Pascal and the Reformers remain culpable for having made the paths straight and the ways smooth for Hume and Kant. The combined effect of the rejection of Protestant and Catholic theology and the scientific/philosophical rejection of Aristotelianism was the exclusion of any teleological view of the human. (MacIntyre’s position on the abilities of unaided reason to discern human ends may be more conservative in later works.) Working only from an understanding of untutored human nature and ethical rule, we face an insurmountable problem. The rules cannot be derived from the human nature as it is. (55)

The Enlightenment project intended to ground morality in human nature. But it foreclosed any successful resolution of this effort when it rejected human teleology and adopted an increasingly broad application of a supposed general principle of logic. This purported

principle states that nothing can appear in a conclusion that does not first appear in the premises. And eventually, as Hume's query on the matter was vulgarized, the claim was advanced as having achieved acceptance: no "ought" can be derived from an "is." That is, no valid prescriptive moral conclusions can be derived from entirely descriptive premises. (56ff.)

MacIntyre shows the inadequacy of the "no-'is'-from-'ought'" principle in the way in which some concepts are inseparably tied to their functions. If and only if we know the function of a watch or a farmer, for example, can we say what a *good* watch or a *good* farmer is. The Enlightenment project to re-ground morality had set aside all such functional understandings of "man." The modern predicament of finding a basis for morality is due in large part to the assumption that an account of goodness can be derived apart from functionality. Man was previously understood as a composite of roles: "member of a family, citizen, soldier, philosopher, servant of God." Only when "man" is conceived of as an individual, and prior to all such roles, does the functional conception of man disappear, *and with it a critical link between nature and morality.* (58) His account of the virtues—based on "practices," the narrative unity of a life, and the context of a social tradition—will reestablish the place of function in a rational account of morality.

To the modern mind, there may not appear to be any difference between Kierkegaard's position in *Enten-Eller* and the appeal to an authoritative tradition. In both instances, authority and reason appear to be disconnected. The difference, says MacIntyre, is this. Whereas in Kierkegaard the authority of a "principle" is finally arbitrary—for no reason—the appeal to tradition in pre-modern cultures *is* a reason. The shape of this reason will become clear in his positive account.

In the Aristotelian construct, the person exists to fulfill a function and this function takes the form of roles. It is in these roles that the person has a *telos*. We understand the demands of morality as a necessary

bridge between the actual human condition and its realized potential in these three stages of human flourishing. Without such roles, there can be no rational support for morality. Instead of a bridge, ethics becomes a pier leading nowhere. MacIntyre's account is Aristotelian, not Aristotle's own. Aristotle's teleology depends on a metaphysical biology that MacIntyre finds unacceptable. MacIntyre claims that some objective personal characteristics, some acquired human excellences, are required to achieve each of the three stages of his positive account. He notes in particular the virtues of justice, courage, and honesty/truthfulness. These virtues are required to achieve 1) the goods internal to "practices," 2) the unified narrative of a life, and 3) the maintenance of a communal tradition. We have a rational basis for ethics, MacIntyre says, because of the necessity of these acquired qualities, virtues common to all three sets of goods.

My negative argument says that MacIntyre cannot build a successful Aristotelian argument unless he provides a substitute for Aristotle's metaphysical biology. He does not provide such a substitute in *After Virtue*. Therefore his account does not succeed. To see why, we must begin with Aristotle's metaphysical biology.

The problem with Aristotle's metaphysical biology

Aristotle's ethical teleology centers on the notion that all things, and specifically biological beings, are inclined toward the perfection of their being. He envisions everything as having an internal tendency toward a natural end that provided an explanation for its observable dynamic characteristics under unimpeded conditions. This in turn depends on his understanding of change in terms of motion. The Aristotelian framework posits four "causes" of any change: material, formal, efficient, and final. What the four meanings share is that each serves as a kind of explanation. Each is a "cause" or explanation (*aition*) in that it is an answer to the questions "Why?" or "Why *this*?" The standard exposition is usually something like this:

- The material cause of a table is what it is *made out of*. (wood, metal, screws...)
- The formal cause of a table is what it is *to be* a table, or what *makes it a table*. (four legs, a surface...)
- The efficient cause of a table is what *makes*—in the sense of *produces*—the table. (a carpenter, a table-making machine...)
- The final cause of a table is what a table is *made for*, its purpose. (dining, writing, holding clutter...) (Adapted from Cohen 2002.)

All four causes come together in the actualization of the table.

The final cause of a table is a function of the carpenter's intention. But what is the final cause of an oak tree? For the purposes of the present discussion, it is Aristotle's biology as an explanation of morality that makes it controversial. Yet what is problematic in Aristotle's framework is not always clearly identified.

For Aristotle and Aquinas, a thing has the nature of that thing because two states of affairs are the case. First, it shares in the form of the thing (its formal cause). Second, it shares the natural end or purpose appropriate to that thing (its final cause). The thing is a good thing, then, to the degree that it perfectly realizes its form, and fully realizes its natural end *by* realizing its form.

For Aquinas the existence of natural ends entails the existence of God, because it entails the existence of a mind that orders things to these different ends. Aristotle's account, however, does not define final causes as a matter of immediate or efficient intentionality, either in the object itself or in, say, the mind of God. So the concept is not theological in any direct way. Rather, final causation is something internal to the tree or to the human, something resulting in a mature tree or a flourishing human being, because of the sequence of normal changes to which it is subject. The final cause is what moves the being

toward its fulfillment if it is “*true to form.*” (Cohen’s expression, 2002)

For Aristotle, the final cause of a human being is the form (*eidos*) of a human being. It is therefore at this point, in the relationship of final causes to forms, that his theory steps beyond the bounds of the natural sciences in the modern paradigm. It is presumably because Aristotle’s “metaphysical biology” is discredited as a scientific paradigm that MacIntyre rejects it in *After Virtue*. (162f.)

But while the description so far is accurate, to leave it there would be to miss something essential. For Aristotle, also, there is an indispensable theological component, though one less prominent than in Aquinas.

Can Aristotle’s theory remain coherent without either this metaphysical component or some metaphysical or theological substitute? Is there in Aristotle’s theory a philosophical core independent of metaphysical or theistic commitments, a core that may be “complicated and added to, but not essentially changed” in theistic frameworks of later Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Aristotelianism? (53) No, I say, to both.⁴

In Part One I will show why MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian account cannot succeed. In finishing this chapter, I simply want to show that Aristotle’s account is irreducibly metaphysical. As in Aquinas, a theistic intelligence is necessary.

⁴ In describing these subsequent traditions of Aristotelianism, MacIntyre says, “The precepts of ethics now have to be understood not only as teleological injunctions, but also as expressions of a divinely ordained law. The table of virtues and vices has to be amended and added to and a concept of sin is added to the Aristotelian concept of error. The law of God requires a new kind of respect and awe. The true end of man can no longer be completely achieved in this world, but only in another. Yet the threefold structure of untutored human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be, human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos* and the precepts of rational ethics as the means for the transition from one to the other remains central to the theistic understanding of evaluative thought and judgment.” (53) Thus in the Aristotelianism of *After Virtue*, the philosophical encompasses the theological, rather than the reverse.

What is “man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature” in Aristotle? Central to Aristotle’s conception of the good is the contemplative life and the *polis* as the smallest self-sufficient unit necessary to support human life, and as the necessary structure to enable the smallest unit of the *contemplative* life, the contemplative man. It is well-known that this conception reflects Aristotle’s notion of the Unmoved Mover in its self-sufficiency and contemplative existence. Rather than trying to exploit that link directly, however, I want to consider the relationship between final causality and nature in Aristotle. (My analysis of Aristotle’s final causality is heavily dependent on Lloyd Gerson’s *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (2005, pp. 122-130).)

Many commentators on Aristotle depict Aristotle’s philosophy of nature as an attempt to show that we need not go beyond nature to explain nature, including human nature, satisfactorily. These interpreters draw on remarks such as Aristotle’s statement that the final causation of nature is like a doctor who heals himself. (1941, p. 251 (*Physics* 199b29-32)) Any “purpose” in nature is inherent, not to be conceived *ab extra*, in reference to external agency. Lloyd Gerson shows that nature is not as self-sufficiently conceived in Aristotle as this. Nature is self-sufficient as a final cause, but only if nature is construed apart from material causality. (2005, pp. 122-130)

Aristotle frequently and consistently refers to final causation in two senses:

1. “the result for the sake of which”
2. “the person or thing for whom or for which something is done” (Gerson 2005, p. 123)

In his use of (2), it is clear that Aristotle does not conceive of any god or gods or any transcendent entity as a final cause of natural change in this sense of final cause. Nothing external is required for the perfection of natural things. So nature is a final cause in the sense of (1). Natural processes act to achieve the benefit or goal or realization

of the potentiality of some natural thing within nature. Nature acts always and only “for the sake of” such a goal/benefit/actualization. But if this is the case, then what is the relationship between (1) and (2)? And does (2) have any place in natural explanation at all? (Gerson 2005, p. 123) What we will see is that (1) is ultimately explained in terms of (2). The Unmoved Mover is the explanation of natural final causes.

An internal cause alone does not explain anything. Suppose that no other evidence for the tendency of acorns to become oak trees is provided, other than that acorns do become oak trees. Suppose also that the claim is put so that no other explanation is possible or necessary. In the critique of Aristotelianism offered by the modern scientific paradigm, the realization of actuality is not an explanation. An acorn acts in such a way as to realize its nature as an oak tree, and this is for its good, but this is not yet an *explanation*, in the modern sense emphasizing efficient causes. The explanation provides no further insight into *how* the natural processes are happening. The phenomenon is touted as an internal property, but is in fact just a re-description of the phenomenon. So the explanation *qua* explanation is vacuous. This is considered a fatal criticism of the Aristotelian paradigm, and rightly so... if the explanation of acorns becoming oak trees were left as such. But the criticism would not have escaped Aristotle. It was in order to complete the explanation that he resorted to the Unmoved Mover as the ultimate in efficient causation.

The neo-Platonist Simplicius demonstrates that Aristotle is not saying that nature is *completely* self-explanatory. Although nature is a principle of motion and standstill, it is such a principle instrumentally. Nature is a moved mover, not an unmoved mover. Nature acts always and only to realize the potential of all natural beings, but its own action is not self-explanatory. We can most easily see this ultimate relationship of dependence with respect to the motion of the astral bodies. While the self-sufficiency of nature as described is true of all organic entities, this is not the case for the motion of the fixed stars.

Lacking the concept of inertia, Aristotle turns to the notion of the Unmoved Mover as an explanation for the origin of motion and for the continuous propulsion of the stars in the second book of *Physics*. (Kullman 1985, p. 126)

As is widely recognized, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is the final cause of nature, Simplicius says. What is less widely recognized is that it is also the efficient cause of nature. Nature is a final cause, but it cannot be the final cause that encompasses nature itself. Nature is not the final cause of nature. And nature is an efficient cause, but cannot be the absolutely first efficient cause. Nature is not the efficient cause of nature. (Simplicius *In Phys.*, pp. 16-29, cited in Gerson 2005, p. 126f.) The Unmoved Mover is not anything like the personal deity of the biblical traditions, of course. But it is nonetheless an intellect separate from nature that acts as final and efficient cause of nature taken as a whole.

If we drop Aristotle's metaphysical biology and his understanding of final causes with it, then how do we explain the fulfillment of human nature? To say what an acorn essentially *is* is to presuppose the oak tree as norm. We cannot know potentiality except with reference to actuality. For Aristotle or for any teleological explanation of morality, actuality must conceptually precede potentiality. This is the point of MacIntyre's critique of the Enlightenment project. It failed to argue from "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature." Yet how do we arrive at this norm? It will not do just to say that humans tend toward the fulfillment of their nature *de facto*. Many don't, even without external interference. And many tend toward ends quite different from those envisioned by Aristotle. We must recognize some end for the sake of which human beings function, such as a specific vision of their flourishing in community. What MacIntyre does not acknowledge in *After Virtue* is that in Aristotle, the form (*eidos*) of human nature that is a *telos* to be realized is ultimately and dependently linked to Aristotle's presuppositions both about the

Unmoved Mover as pure actuality *and also* about man as the center of the natural order.

These metaphysical/theological commitments do not figure in the positive argument of *After Virtue*. In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, the sequel to *After Virtue*, it is Aquinas that emerges as exemplar of how a tradition of enquiry advances and supplants what went before, in a theologically-structured synthesis of the insights of Aristotle with those of Augustine. (MacIntyre 1988, pp. 164-208) The conclusions of practical rationality, from Aristotle through Aquinas, flow necessarily from their respective ends, in goods including but transcending the fulfillment of human nature.

Now, Aquinas' account of morality in the *Summa* is theological from first to last. In his paradigmatic natural law theory, the natural law is, from a God's-eye perspective, a dimension of divine providence. The structure of the *Summa* makes this clear: the treatise on grace follows the treatise on law, grace in the supernatural following and building on grace in the natural. From the point of view of the human recipient, the natural law consists in the principles of practical rationality applied to human action. Thomas' theory is situated in the context of his theory of law, which is

nothing else but a dictate of practical reason emanating from the ruler who governs a perfect community. Now it is evident, granted that the world is ruled by Divine Providence... that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. Wherefore the very Idea of the government of things in God the Ruler of the universe, has the nature of a law. (*ST* 1-2. 91.1)

Thomas conceives of law therefore as a function of divine providence. The moral force of natural law is derived from the given-ness of the conception of the good life, with God as final cause. There is nothing in the conclusions of practical rationality that is not in these premises.

“Good” is assumed to have both subjective and objective standing. The human good is partly constitutive of *the* good.

How then should we understand the scarcity of the theological in some avowedly Thomistic natural lawyers? They have developed natural law justifications of moral behavior without a strong theological (or metaphysical) component, yet despite their differences, each places his/her theory in the tradition of Aquinas. (Compare for example MacIntyre 1984, pp. 181-225, and MacIntyre 2000.) How can this dissimilarity with Aquinas be explained?

Many Thomistic natural law theorists argue for the equivalence of the dictates of the Decalogue and the dictates of reason. On this understanding unaided human reason can produce an ethics in conformity to the Ten Commandments. From the Stoics to Spinoza the relationship between God and the natural order is so close that the two are often used interchangeably: *deus sive natura*. Less extremely, some natural lawyers who are also theists do not see the explicit reference to God as necessary to an adequate account of morality. They claim that unaided reason can adequately dictate both what human-flourishing-based-in-social-goods is and also how that flourishing is realized. Something like the following line of reasons, I think, is used in reaching this conclusion:

1. Practical rationality participates in the theoretical rationality of the Eternal Law in the mind of God.
2. Practical reasoning concerning human flourishing is therefore, indirectly, reasoning according to the Eternal Law in the divine mind.
3. Humans flourish to the extent that they realize their inherent potentialities as self-sustaining substances. Such substances are initially created by God, but are subsequently self-perpetuating. So God’s purposes are actualized in the normal functioning of the being.

4. The virtues are required for the realization of human flourishing.⁵ Therefore an adequate account of the virtues is possible without bringing God's purposes into the foreground. (And in a pluralistic social context, it is therefore best to forego this reference.)⁶

At least three assumptions remain unstated and unexamined here, and these assumptions are central to my negative argument.

First, the flourishing life is conflated with the good life. To flourish according to our natural capacities just is to actualize God's purposes. Second, flourishing is assumed to be a good that the fully rational human subject cannot fail to will. Third, the particulars of what this flourishing entails are assumed to be wholly or largely known across fundamentally different cultural conceptions of ultimate reality.

Because the particulars of flourishing are known, at least in large part, the particulars of the moral norms required to realize that end are thereby also known. I deny these assumptions and my objection is best seen in light of a subsequent version of them.

In *Dependent Rational Animals*, MacIntyre explicitly reverts to biology in his explanation of morality. (1999, p. x) His argument there actually exacerbates the inadequacy to which I am pointing in *After*

⁵ MacIntyre argues—crucially and I think correctly—that the goods of flourishing are *shared* and *cooperatively social*.

⁶ I am indebted to Tim Stanton for clarification on pieces of this understanding.

MacIntyre seems to recognize explicitly the need for the presuppositional framework that I say is necessary in "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues" (1998). He says that in each science there are first principles that provide premises for arguments, and that specify causal agencies—material, formal, efficient and final. "It follows also that, insofar as the perfected sciences are themselves hierarchically organized, the most fundamental of sciences [theology] will specify that in terms of which everything that can be understood is to be understood. And this, as Aquinas remarks in a number of places, we call God. There is then an ineliminable theological dimension—theological, that is, in the sense that makes Aristotle's metaphysics a *theologia*—to enquiry conceived in an Aristotelian mode." (1998, 183f) His own presuppositions with regard to theology, however, do not appear in *After Virtue* or even in some arguments subsequent to this statement, such as *Dependent Rational Animals*.

Virtue, by basing morality on human *biological* flourishing. The shape of my problem with the *After Virtue* project as a whole is therefore more clearly seen with respect to the account of *Dependent Rational Animals*.

Any picture of human flourishing has to address one way or another the needs and vulnerabilities of the human body. So the most obvious conditions and limits imposed by the flourishing of our nature are those based on the biological. Now, *ex post facto* my presuppositions about divine intentions for human flourishing, I am deeply sympathetic with an emphasis on human physicality in ethics. I am deeply skeptical, however, of any account of ethics based *merely* on biological considerations. Sociobiological accounts such as those of Arnhart (1998) and of MacIntyre in *Dependent Rational Animals* tend to minimize both the central role and the freedom of the divine and the human wills in morality. We cannot derive the criteria of normalcy in mature human nature just from, say, statistical norms. As Arnhart himself recognizes, there are many “natural” states of affairs that we believe to be unacceptable. (1998, pp. 137ff)⁷

The attempt to establish the meaning of “flourishing” on a biological basis is misguided, both because many of the goods of human flourishing are higher in rank than human biological goods, and also because we can overcome our desire for the goods of our biological nature. There is almost nearly universal agreement that we should do so. The influences of biblical and other traditions in Western culture concerning *what humans ought to be* have prevented the brute application of many *merely* animalic considerations in human ends and flourishing. Human ends transcend the categories of their biological nature and indeed transcend any ends yet realized in history, or so claim the biblical traditions. The most excellent modes

⁷ I do not accept as normative, for example, either war or male dominance, both of which Arnhart finds unobjectionable, and *rightly* natural.

of life that *have* so far been realized only weakly anticipate those ends and are not conceivable apart from those ends.

But if those ends are at all correct, and if they specifically require divine intervention, both for any degree of actualization in this life and in the life following and transcending this life, and if even our supra-natural biological ends are realized only in the realization of our comprehensive spiritual ends, then how can any account of ethics succeed without evoking those spiritual ends? If human beings can reach their ultimate end only in transcending the merely natural, as natural lawyers in the Thomist tradition believe, then they cannot base an adequate ethics on merely biological ends, without reference to ends that transcend the merely natural. The only ends dictated solely by biology are the material advantages that the most adaptive variations in a species possess and pass on to their descendents by their genetic code. No understanding of human flourishing based in biology alone can adequately account for the virtues MacIntyre, for one, wants to promote. Joseph Dunne (2002), drawing on Raimond Gaita (2000) and Charles Taylor (1996), shows how MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian case in *Dependent Rational Animals* represents a step back from the Thomist position advanced in *Whose Justice?* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. As Gaita says, "an ethics centred on the concept of human flourishing does not have the conceptual resources to keep fully among us... people who are severely and ineradicably afflicted." (2000, p. 19) If flourishing is biologically based and rationally promoted, then how can, say, eugenics be morally tainted? Aristotle himself advocated infanticide in the case of birth defects. (Aristotle 1941, p. 1302 (NE 1335b20-1) In a society built on the biological basis of morality, why shouldn't we euthanize those unable *ever* to become "independent practical reasoners" (MacIntyre 1999, chap. 8) because of mental disabilities? If those with merely physical congenital deformities are allowed to live by the logic of reciprocity, why shouldn't they be sterilized?

The good life reduced to human biology—that’s the point of my objection to MacIntyre *exaggerated*. I say that the good transcends biological flourishing in a way beyond the resources of sociobiology to explain.⁸

What is the relationship between human flourishing and the good? And are we capable of distinguishing the end of the flourishing life from the end of the good life in practical rationality? Consider two sorts of relationship conceivable between the fully flourishing life and *the good*: possible conflict and necessary harmony. Consider them with respect both to objective morality and to morality in the moral subject.

Is it the case that harmony between the flourishing of human beings and *the good* is somehow a logical or metaphysical necessity? That is, is it impossible that the genuine flourishing of one being or species inhibit, or in any way limit, the flourishing of any other being/species? For example, is it *impossible* in a world of fully rational beings for the genuine flourishing of one individual, or of humans in society, to be threatened by the flourishing of any other species?

Or, if the maximal realization of the potential of one being/species, in absolute terms, *can* possibly conflict with the maximal realization of another being/species, is the “flourishing” of the one *necessarily* in terms of the other flourishing of the other? That is, is it a metaphysical *necessity*, for example, that “flourishing” for all non-rational species

⁸ Nothing in this claim should be read as positing the human as a non-material essence over against the physical body. In careful analysis, the ancient Hebrew “soul” (*nephesh*) refers both to the visible and to the invisible aspects of human life. Human beings are not *essentially* non-material. A soul is a spirit in a body. One or the other alone does not constitute a complete human. In the context of the Koine Greek of the New Testament as well, the meaning of “soul” (*psyche*) is often synonymous with the person viewed holistically. (See *Romans* 13.1) The central teaching of the New Testament about the future state of human life is not immortality, but the resurrection of body and soul reunited. (See Hoekema 1994, pp. 86-91, 239-252.) This position has often been ignored in church history. Calvin could refer to the “prison-house” of the body. (1953, vol 1., p. 160; (*Inst.* 1.15.2)) On balance, Aquinas’ view of the human is not dualistic. (See Lee and George 2005a; 2005b, and MacIntyre 1990, pp. 152ff.)

be defined just in terms of whatever contributes to the flourishing of human beings?

If the answer to any of these is no, then the good life for humans does not necessarily entail human flourishing. And so in a relationship of possible conflict, the flourishing life is not *necessarily* the good life. If a positive relationship of human flourishing to *the* good is not a metaphysical necessity, then it must be shown that the good life entails human flourishing.

For non-rational beings, this distinction poses no problem, obviously. They do what they do without freedom of will. For rational beings, there is a question. The question is whether the human will can accommodate this distinction between the flourishing life and the good life. Suppose that there is a logical possibility of a conflict of maximal human flourishing, in absolute terms, either between individuals, or between humans and non-human entities. Are we free *not* to will our flourishing? If this conflict between the flourishing of species is possible, even though it is not actual, are humans free to will human flourishing *for the sake of* some greater good? Even if human flourishing should *happen* to be fully compatible with *the* good, that is, could we then will *the* good above our own flourishing? If so, then the pursuit of our flourishing is therefore not necessarily moral *per se*.

What if a conflict between the flourishing life and the good life is *not* possible? This is a second sort of relationship conceivable between the flourishing life and *the* good, a relationship of necessary harmony. The question of morality in the subject remains. Even if the flourishing life is necessarily *harmonious* with *the* good, it seems unlikely that *the* good is *reducible* to, entirely *constituted* of, or *coterminous* with, human flourishing. Unless *the* good is purely a function of human will, I don't see how human flourishing can be the same thing as *the* good. So even if human flourishing and the good are necessarily harmonious, there is still the question of what we can will.

Can practical rationality distinguish between our flourishing and *the* good? That is, can we will our flourishing *for the sake of* a greater good? Can we will *the* good above our own flourishing?

I say that we can and that we must. I say that *the* good transcends human flourishing in *all* its dimensions. In the biblical tradition that I will defend in Part Two, the ranking of the goods of our animalic nature and of our nature comprehensively are entailed in God's free decision (in creating the *imago Dei*, in the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and in the rest of the redemptive narrative) concerning the ends of human life. The relative importance of human flourishing rests on that free decision. Practical rationality can and must reflect this distinction.

In the remainder of Part One, I will consider MacIntyre's account in *After Virtue* and argue that it does not succeed. The Enlightenment abandoned Aristotle. MacIntyre has abandoned Aristotle's metaphysical framework. No Aristotelian account of the virtues can succeed without the Unmoved Mover or some other explanatory agent distinct from empirical phenomena.

With the preceding sketch of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian argument and of the issues to be discussed as roadmap, I move now to an examination of the first stage of his argument, his winsome concept of "practices." In view of my larger argument, the critical relationship to track here will be the one between virtues and the goods they serve and make possible. I want to argue that no account of goods, practices, or virtues as ends, short of a comprehensive conception of the good life in pursuit of *the* good, can frame an adequate account of morality.

VIRTUES AND PRACTICES

One of the most well-known, compelling, and appealing pieces of MacIntyre's positive argument in *After Virtue* is his theory of "practices." Although the concept is complex, it is at once applicable to virtually every human endeavor and also elemental in its explanatory power. We can see its relevance to activities as varied as architecture, football, and family life. We can explain both to children and to CEO's why they must develop certain capacities of character. But it is perhaps *because* this theory is so broad and powerful that even MacIntyre underestimates the particularity and exclusivity of its precise application. By this I mean that if the concept of practices is applied to a robust conception of the good life in any given tradition, the virtues and goods of these practices will not have the universality that MacIntyre strongly implies that they have. Despite his acknowledgement of differences in lists of virtues across cultural contexts, MacIntyre claims that *genuine* virtues are required to sustain the cooperative activities he calls practices. Specifically, he has characterized "the virtues" as those acquired dispositions necessary to the realization of goods internal to practices.

It is at the level of practices and the virtues they necessitate that I begin to develop my disagreements with MacIntyre's approach in the *After Virtue* project. The full significance of this disagreement will come to light only in chapter 9, where I argue that because the ultimate end of eudaimonism cannot adequately conceptualize our ultimate good as *the* good—God, on my understanding—it cannot present a coherent account of genuine virtues. To demonstrate that that part of my conclusion is accurate, I must necessarily call into question here MacIntyre's claim that only genuine virtues can sustain practices and make possible the attainment of the goods internal to practices. My interest is not to deny that apparently virtuous behavior

in the pursuit of sub-ultimate ends has any value. Rather, I want to stress the importance of the focus of moral psychology. Throughout Part One I will emphasize that the ends of virtues are determinative in the genuineness of those virtues, and that the ultimate end of the virtues is ultimately determinative.

In the following I begin my case for an understanding of the virtues as being thoroughly tied to exclusive conceptions of the good life. The chapter is organized as follows. I outline MacIntyre's case that the virtues are necessary for sustaining practices. Only genuine virtues can realize the goods internal to what he calls "practices." He defines the virtues circularly. They are required to realize certain goods, it turns out, because these virtues are defined first as those qualities necessary to attain those goods. He recognizes that the scope of practices is inadequate to the task of constructing an adequate account of the virtues as a whole. I think that practices are inadequate even to the task of identifying a genuine virtue. If this is correct, then it suggests that the dispositions necessary to sustain practices may not be genuine virtues for a given coherent conception of the good life. And if they are not genuine virtues for a given coherent conception of the good life, then they are not universal virtues. This suggestion will be confirmed in chapters 4 and 5, where I show that the identification of genuine virtues requires a much broader context than practices; it requires a robust conception of the good life.

Definition of a practice

The structure and conditions of "practices" form the first and most basic stage of a conceptual core of MacIntyre's account of the virtues.

(186) What, then, is a practice?

By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellences, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (187)

The concepts of *cooperative activity* and *internal goods* are at the heart of this definition. Cooperative activity raises no particular obstacle to comprehension, though its importance cannot be overstated; the smallest unit of moral analysis is not individual but social. "Internal goods" requires explanation. They are "internal" for two reasons. First, they are goods related to the particular practice itself. Second, they can only be identified and recognized "by the experience of participating in the practice in question." (188-189) Only by participating at some level in a practice can anyone become capable of evaluating the internal goods of that practice. A person who had never read nor discussed any of the recognized classics of Western political philosophy, to invent an example, could not competently judge the merits of an essay on a question within that literature.

MacIntyre identifies two principal kinds of goods internal to any practice: the excellence of production and participation in the life-of-the practitioner. (189f.) In the first kind of good, production refers both to whole of the craft as exercised and to the product that results from that craft. He cites products of practices such as paintings, football passes, and experiments in physics. (187ff.) A fine portrait stands as a good internal to portrait-making. It also represents one stage in the progress of the art of portrait-making as it evolved toward greater and greater realization of the purpose and meaning of the art. And it may represent a step in the transformation of the art's purpose

and meaning as these are extended toward previously unimagined directions and aspirations.

The second sort of internal good of practices is participation in the life-of-a-practitioner, to whatever extent that life constitutes the agent's life. MacIntyre gives few details here, but we might be justified in identifying this life with that unique configuration of constitutive goals, activities, and relationships without which such a life is not possible. In the case of a footballer, for example, this might include physical training, nutritional regimens, communication and understanding between coach and player and between the players, tactics and strategies before and during matches, and all of this realized synchronically.

In identifying internal goods, MacIntyre draws a crucial contrast. Internal goods differ from *external* goods in that the latter are the objects of competition, rather than of *cooperation*. In the pursuit of money, prestige, or power, others cannot simultaneously share what one gains or wins. External goods are the objects of zero-sum games. Internal goods, by contrast, enrich the whole community of practitioners. When one excels, all others in the community benefit from the advancements made. (190f.)

There is another type of internal good that MacIntyre does not explicitly mention under that heading, but that can be found later in his constructive argument, the pleasures or enjoyments associated with practices. Not *all* pleasures qualify as internal goods; some pleasures and enjoyments are internal, some external. When a person achieves success in a practice, he typically enjoys the achievement, and this pleasure supervenes on the achievement as part of the state of being associated with the achievement. It is not pleasure or enjoyment that the person aims for, however, contra utilitarianism. In the Aristotelian model, enjoyment supervenes on achievements within the practice, what MacIntyre has previously called the products of

practices (197f). We might add that pleasure supervenes also on the other internal good previously mentioned, the life-of-a-practitioner.

It is only through the practice in question that the goods internal to that practice can be obtained. So “the goods internal to the practice of chess cannot be had in any other way but by playing chess or some other game of that specific kind.” (188)⁹ This stands in contrast to external goods, which MacIntyre says can be procured without any particular practice.

Standards of excellence and obedience to rules are also indispensable to practices. To learn a practice is in part to respect the authority of those standards and to recognize one’s own inadequacies in the practice. It is to become teachable. MacIntyre juxtaposes the established authority of recognized practitioners with subjectivist and emotivist analyses of judgment. (190)

As already mentioned, the conceptions of the goods and ends of a practice are transformed and enriched by the *extension of human powers and of the internal goods* that partially define the practice. The combined excellences demanded by a practice are such that they surpass complete mastery and call practitioners to grow in their accomplishments and abilities. With the realization of the internal goods of practices over history, our growing understanding of those goods enlarges and transforms our understanding of the goods and ends of a practice. We see new and different possibilities for those goods. (193f.)

Excellences, powers, abilities—all these prefigure MacIntyre’s provisional definition of a virtue as a human excellence of a certain sort:

⁹ Accomplished chess players might protest that there is *not* any other game like chess. Part of what they mean, I think, is that no other game delivers quite the same package of goods that chess does. The extent to which other practices can or cannot deliver the same goods, I will argue in the next chapter, is central to their individuation.

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. (191)

Note that MacIntyre here defines the virtues as necessary, though not sufficient, means to an end, namely, to the achievement of internal goods. Without the key virtues, “the goods internal to practices are barred to us”; the lack of these virtues “bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice” and “it renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods.” (191) The virtues are qualities that enable internal goods.

An even closer connection exists between the virtues and the personal relationships of practices. Practices are cooperative and therefore relational. They require particular relationships between the practitioner and his/her fellow practitioners. MacIntyre has said that attaining the internal goods of practices requires “subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners.”

Every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it. Now the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationships to those other people with whom we share the kinds of purposes and standards which inform practices. (190-191)

It is the virtues then that actually define the relationships of practices. Here the virtues just *are* another sort of good inherent to practices that aggregately constitute our relationship with other practitioners. Nor are these relationships limited to our contemporaries. To become a practitioner, we must also learn from the past, so that our relationship to the received tradition of the practice requires truthfulness, courage, and justice, much as do our relationships with present-day practitioners. (194)

So MacIntyre has defined the virtues with respect to the *goods internal to practices* and the *relationships* forming the context of practices. This is the feature of the virtues that I wish to emphasize here, and in so doing, to emphasize the teleological shape of the virtues. I want to summarize this definitional circularity, then return to it later for elaboration. In this chapter and recurrently throughout Part One, it will become apparent that the goods served by virtues determinatively shape those virtues.

Virtuously circular: the necessity of the virtues

What are the virtues? As it turns out, the answer to this question is found in the answer to another: What must we do to attain these internal goods? “We have to learn to recognize what is due to whom [justice]; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way [courage]; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts [honesty/truthfulness].” (191) Each of the three cardinal virtues in MacIntyre’s account is therefore defined with respect to the goods and relationships internal to practices. That is, the virtues are defined as just those qualities that enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices. But as we will see, he then goes on to claim that the virtues are required to attain the goods internal to practices. So his argument concerning the virtues is circular, virtuously circular. Far from denying this claim, I wish to make it a central feature of my own argument and do so even more rigorously than the argument of *After Virtue* does. But let’s begin with the case made there.

Consider the virtue of courage: “We hold courage to be a virtue,” MacIntyre says, “because the care and concern for individuals, communities and causes which is so crucial to so much in practices *requires the existence of such a virtue.*” (192, emphasis added) And little more is added to individuate this disposition. That is, an instance of courage *just is* whatever action is required of the actor in order to

protect individuals, communities, and causes, at the risk of the actor. The virtue of courage just is the disposition to so act to protect them.

This can be seen more clearly in answer to this question: Is this a disposition to so act with respect to *any* individuals, communities or causes at all? The answer to this question depends on the scope of the practices in question. But in general, the answer is no. As defined so far, courage is a disposition to so act only toward those individuals, communities, and causes specified by some criteria of valuation relative to the goods of practices. The goods A, B, and C internal to practices are valued more highly than the constitutive aspects of oneself X, Y, and Z that are risked in the protection of those goods. So courage as described so far is not an incidental, or independent, human quality that just so happens to serve us in attaining the goods internal to practices. It is one quality among several qualities exclusively defined with respect to the attainment of those goods.

To anticipate the argument of the next few chapters, take the example of courage in Aristotle's account. Aristotle's conception of the good life is wrapped up in his understanding of the *polis* as the full realization of human potential. His ultimate display of courage is the rational sacrifice of the soldier's life that he makes for his *polis*. It is most definitely *not* the willingness to sacrifice or even to risk his life for another human being regardless of whether this being is a kinsman or compatriot. Such an act would not be courageous, but foolish, precisely because of this relationship, or lack of relationship. His understanding of courage, on careful examination, follows necessarily from Aristotle's conception of the good life.

Another of the qualities required to attain internal goods is honesty/truthfulness. Here again I will enlarge slightly on MacIntyre's comment. On his neo-Aristotelian view, friendship itself is defined with respect to the shared pursuit of goods. (191) A practitioner has an understanding of what the facts of a matter are, and takes that to be the truth. An instance of truthfulness just is the action of communicating

the essential details of those facts to another person *in such a way as to enable that person to pursue the goods* that they both share. The disposition to do this is the virtue of truthfulness.

If, on a question of mutual importance to the practitioner and two other people, he lies to one of them and tells the truth to the other, he cannot claim to be in the same sort of relationship with both. (191) This is because, as has been noted, both relationships are defined with reference to shared goods. By not dealing truthfully with the first person, he has effectively acted so as to hinder the person from attaining those goods. They no longer share the pursuit of those goods, and therefore, unless the situation is corrected, they can no longer continue to be friends.

Finally, justice is essential to attaining internal goods.

If A, a professor, gives B and C the grades that their papers deserve, but grades D because he is attracted by D's blue eyes or is repelled by D's dandruff, he has defined his relationship to D differently from his relationship to the other members of the class, whether he wishes to or not. Justice requires that we treat others in respect of merit or desert according to uniform and impersonal standards.... (192)

MacIntyre and his readers understand that some sort of academic practice is in question here. Unfortunately, the description of the case does not make this explicit, and therefore obscures the point I am making. What are the goods involved in the practice of, say, political studies at the undergraduate level? They would include familiarity with some area of the most basic body of knowledge in the discipline, with a view to applying those achievements in the lives of the students, and eventually expanding achievements in that discipline. The place of written work in this practice is to enable students to attain these and other goods by taking some first steps toward mastery of an aspect of the course of study and then by displaying it in the

discipline. The professor marks those papers with respect both to contemporary standards of mastery in the discipline and to the expected level of achievement for such students. The marks inform the students of their progress toward the goods in order to enable them better to reach them.

So here again, the virtue is defined in terms of the goods it serves. Justice is giving to each his or her due; in this case, giving a mark that reflects the standards of the discipline for the quality of the paper written. The virtue of justice is a disposition to do so as a function of the goods pursued. In this case, justice is the ability to learn and to write on a given topic in political studies, among other things. In a practice with different internal goods—a school for training cosmeticians or fashion models, perhaps—eye coloring and personal hygiene could quite possibly be taken into consideration as factors for the mark on a paper, and justly so. Would these factors bear on the students' attainment of the goods of the practice? Not in political studies. There is no known instrumental connection between them and the goods internal to political studies. There might possibly be such a connection to the goods internal to the cosmetic and fashion industries. *So the criteria for determining the justice of considering these factors in marking a paper depend on the goods pursued.* What we have in this neo-Aristotelian account is not a demonstration of the necessity of a disposition toward justice in the abstract. It is not yet even the demonstration of the necessity of a disposition toward justice in the larger scope of a good life. What we have to this point in the argument of *After Virtue* is only the necessity of such a disposition for achieving a particular set of goods.

The relationship of these dispositions—courage, honesty, and justice, at least—to the goods internal to practices and the relationships they entail, in sum, is the relationship between the second and third parts of the three-part structure of Aristotelian morality. The goods and relationships of practices, that is, are partly constitutive of

MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian *telos* of human existence, a *telos* understood functionally.

MacIntyre tells us that an account of practices alone would be inadequate. In the subsequent chapter of *After Virtue* he goes on to present two more stages of the human *telos*, the narrative unity of a life and a communal tradition. He does not link his three cardinal virtues to these two stages with anything like the specificity that they are given in the description of practices. As a result, the circular nature of the virtues is not fully demonstrated, nor are the implications that follow from this circularity made apparent. One such implication is that virtues cannot be universal in the way that MacIntyre strongly implies.

As we have seen, it is his claim that practical rationality dictates these virtues as necessary means to specific ends. At other times he seems to refer to "the virtues" as if they represented a set of dispositions universally recognized across time and culture through universally recognized practices, integrated lives, and communal traditions. The implied universality of the virtues, despite important differences in traditions, makes the virtues independent of any *specific and exclusive* understanding of the human *telos*. So while the Enlightenment project attempted to do without a *telos*, at least at the point of development of his project in *After Virtue*, MacIntyre seems to be proposing a *universal telos*.

This is unsatisfactory, because of course the Enlightenment was partly the result of the inability to settle on such a universal *telos*. MacIntyre ought to have dispelled any notion in *After Virtue* that a *telos* common to all conceptions of the good exists. This may be the position he takes in *Whose Justice?* But if it is, then he ought also to have recognized more explicitly there that the argument of *After Virtue* wrongly implies that the virtues are universal. As the two pieces of his project stand, he seems to have a two-horned problem.

Either *After Virtue* inadequately recognizes the impasse of moral philosophy *before* the Enlightenment and therefore MacIntyre should have placed his positive argument in the context of one such conception of the good life as the human *telos*. It will be my claim that the three-part Aristotelian structure is roughly correct, but that MacIntyre's account neither specifies the missing third part—"man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature"—nor proposes a framework that could constitute a reason for thinking that such a part even exists independently of human will.

Or, second horn, his argument is asserting that "the virtues" have a status that is freestanding, and are not tied to mutually incompatible conceptions of the human *telos*. If virtues are *not* defined in reference to a particular *telos*, then his position is similar to the way the Enlightenment vainly tried to justify morality, in the following respect. It holds that differences in our ultimate end are not consequential to a successful account of "the virtues." The argument below, through chapter 5, denies this conclusion.

The achievement of the goods of practices is not sufficient even for establishing the existence of genuine virtues. To see why not, we need to look much more closely at the structure of genuine virtues, according to any one tradition's conception of the good life, as differentiated from simulacra. To understand which dispositions are necessary for achieving the goods of practices and which are not, we have to understand what distinguishes virtues from their simulacra. What I hope to show is that something less than genuine virtues, on any tradition's conception of the good life, are necessary to realize the goods of practices. This confirms the impossibility of basing an adequate account of the virtues in practices alone.

Now, MacIntyre acknowledges the insufficiency of the account so far, although on other reasons. So questioning that the dispositions necessary to achieve the goods of practices might seem unnecessary. Let's look at his reasons.

A life based only on the account of the virtues defined with respect to practices would be defective in three ways, MacIntyre says. First, it would be the subject of too many conflicts and too much arbitrariness. Given the conflicting claims of practices, the individual would be thrown back on a modern understanding of choice between conflicting allegiances, unless something beyond practices distinguishes better choices from poorer choices. (201f.) We need a more comprehensive understanding of our end in order to rank goods and reconcile tensions between them.

“Secondly, without an overriding conception of the *telos* of a whole human life, conceived as a unity, our conception of certain individual virtues has to remain partial and incomplete.” We do not yet have a full picture of the virtues. Justice as desert, for example, requires an ordering of goods beyond practices. (202) Desert is determined by the ordering of goods and goes beyond the multiplicity of goods of practices. A *telos*, a rational ordering of goods, sets the limits of a virtue such as patience and delineates it from the excesses of anger and apathy/weakness.

Third, at least one virtue requires reference to a whole life: integrity or constancy, singleness of purpose. “This notion of singleness of purpose in a whole life can have no application unless that of a whole life does.” (203) All three points of inadequacy, then, point to the need for a more comprehensive *telos*. MacIntyre continues his account of the virtues in the following chapter, chapter 15, “The Virtues, the Unity of a Human Life and the Concept of a Tradition,” with the express purpose of completing what was lacking from the perspective of practices.

A coherent account of morality requires an overarching *telos* to human life. MacIntyre recognizes this much. Nevertheless, despite the three inadequacies just noted, his account of practices is the most well-known feature of his positive argument, and it does seem to stand alone. And the reason that it seems to stand alone is because it claims

that the goods of practices cannot be achieved without practice-wide possession of genuine virtues. If this claim is correct, then there is broad societal possession of genuine virtues wherever the goods internal to practices are being produced.

Moreover, MacIntyre's position about the place of practices in his larger argument is ambiguous. In presenting the second and third stages of his argument, his lack of specificity concerning our conception of the good life in chapter 15 of *After Virtue* suggests that the ordering of the goods of the three stages is much more aggregate and inductive than it is deductive or adductive. The ranking of those goods is not *determined* by a strong conception of the good life, not even by an evolving conception. MacIntyre implies that the good life is constituted by the goods of practices harmoniously ordered as a narrative, but not necessarily ordered to some comprehensive conception of the good. He says, for example, that tragic conflict between roles is ineliminable and irresolvable. (223f.) This suggests, at least, that the goods of practices are not finally capable of being ordered in a unified narrative. This in turn suggests that the goods of practices, although irreconcilable, are somehow more fundamentally basic to our conception of the good life than the other two stages. He says of the three stages of his account that "each later stage presupposes the earlier, but not *vice versa*." (187) And in *After Virtue* MacIntyre does not entertain the question of conflict between traditions, implying that the goods of practices are goods universally recognized across traditions.

So for all these reasons, I need to confirm the insufficiency of practices not only for an adequate account of the virtues, but even for positively identifying virtues as genuine.

Genuine virtues or semblances?

The history of practices, MacIntyre says, is the history of the virtues and vices. (195f.) Where the virtues flourish, practices will also

flourish. Where vices reign, practices will be brought low. This much seems incontrovertible. What is problematic here, however, is the implication that the core of courage, honesty and justice are static across practices and lives and traditions. MacIntyre claims, even while noting cultural differences, that “the” virtues of courage, honesty, and justice are required to attain the goods of practices in *any* understanding of the good life. I think that this underestimates the differences between the virtues on one understanding of the good life and those of other traditions’ understandings of the good life. While MacIntyre notes that the virtues are different on different accounts of well-being or flourishing, and that those *tables* of the virtues are incompatible (162f.), he also seems to believe that there are genuinely universal virtues, and practices, that transcend any one tradition’s conception of the good. So the following three claims are strongly implied, if not actually explicit in his argument:

1. The genuine virtues of honesty/truthfulness, courage, and justice according to one tradition’s conception of the good life are the genuine virtues of another tradition. The virtues are universal.
2. Practices and their goods transcend conceptions of the good.
3. In order to sustain practices, genuine and universal virtues must be broadly exemplified in society

I deny all three claims. The importance of this denial for my overall argument is to underline the centrality of particular and exclusive ends to the definition of virtues.¹⁰ MacIntyre has not yet given us a full account of the virtues. His historical chapters have given evolving

¹⁰ It is not clear that MacIntyre maintains these claims subsequent to *After Virtue*, for considerations similar to those that I will present. His introduction to *Whose Justice?* recognizes the mistake in *After Virtue* of denying the unity of the virtues, for example. (1988, p. x) This recognition and the argument of *Whose Justice?* as a whole seem most clearly contrary to claim 1 above. So whether this part of my project amounts to a disagreement with MacIntyre or just a clarification/development of his argument is debatable.

contexts in which the virtues were exercised. In his own positive argument he tells us that a virtue is a necessary quality for the attainment of the internal goods of practices. He has given us *examples*—the cardinal virtues of justice, courage, honesty—but we do not yet have enough information to identify the central subject of our discussion. This is in large part because, as he notes, the account is incomplete without the second and third stages of his account, the narrative unity of a life and traditions. But if we don't yet have a full account of the virtues, then how do we know that the dispositions maintaining practices are genuine virtues? My worry is that something short of genuine, universal virtues may allow us to attain the goods of practices.

In the postscript to the second edition of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre responds to some early critics of his thesis. He says there that a virtue is only a virtue by his accounting if it is required to achieve the goods of all three stages. There are qualities required for some practices—ruthlessness and relentlessness in wilderness exploration is his example (275)—that are required for the first stage of his account, practices, but not for the second and third. Indeed, these qualities would actually undermine the second and third stages. They are therefore not to be counted as virtues. To be counted as a virtue, a quality must be required for all three.

For closely related reasons, I contend that a person exhibiting a quality should not be considered to possess a genuine virtue until the person has demonstrated its possession in all three stages. If a person is genuinely courageous, for example, she will not only be courageous within the sphere of a practice, but also throughout her life and social world. In his chapter on practices MacIntyre has already mentioned that what looks like patience could turn out to be less than virtuous with a larger view than practices. (202) So I do not think that my claim here is especially controversial. Yet the consequences of this claim do raise problems for his claim that only genuine virtues can sustain practices. It follows from my point here that if a person does

not demonstrate the virtues in dimensions of her life beyond a particular practice, then the quality she is demonstrating in pursuing the goods of the practice is not quite a virtue. Or at least, it is not a virtue in the sense intended by his claim that we do not have the virtues if we do not have them constantly. (198) On the other hand, if the disposition is not a virtue, then what is it?

Semblances and simulacra of virtues, MacIntyre says, will not suffice to achieve internal goods. Unfortunately, *After Virtue* does not say much about simulacra. In reviewing Aristotle's account of the virtues, MacIntyre emphasizes that it is the process of practical rationality that distinguishes genuine virtues from other dispositions. Less-than-genuinely-virtuous people may accomplish right actions. Some persons untrained in the virtues have natural traits and talents that fortuitously lead them to act in ways that resemble the virtues. But, he says, they are often subject to their own uneducated emotions and desires as well, such that frequently they do *not* desire the right actions and ends, and therefore do not achieve them. Virtuous people consistently act virtuously *because* they recognize that the actions in question are virtuous, and not for other reasons.

Courage, to narrow our focus, is a rational disposition to pursue goods in the face of fears connected with this pursuit. A person might rescue another person from violence by a mob at risk to himself. By Aquinas' account, following Aristotle, this apparently courageous act might in reality be motivated by one of several semblances of courage. First, the person might surmount this difficulty as though it were not difficult: through ignorance of the danger, through irrational optimism, or through confidence in his ability to deal with such a situation. A well-trained soldier may act in a way that appears courageous, but in fact only displays a simulacrum of courage resulting from good training. Secondly, he might perform the act without genuine courage through the impulse of a passion, such as a fit of anger. Or thirdly, he might rescue the other person in pursuit of some motive such as publicity, the thrill of defying a crowd, or

monetary reward, on the one hand, or because he fears blame, punishment, or fears suffering some loss, such as dishonor, on the other hand. (*ST* 2-2.123.1) Thus the acts of persons in the pursuit of unworthy ends, remarkable as they may be, can turn out to be driven by ignoble passions or motives, or simply by mistaken reason. In each case, what appears to be a courageous act is only a semblance thereof. In each case, simulacra of the virtues are defective in their reasons for action.

I want to leverage these observations against MacIntyre's claims relative to the universality of the virtues and the necessity that they be genuine in order to sustain practices. His claims concern primarily the possession of virtues in society as a whole, and before long I must address them at that level. But I will begin at the level of the individual, in order to highlight the ways in which simulacra can suffice to obtain goods internal to practices.

Simulacra in individuals

We do not have direct access to the information actually required to identify a genuine virtue. The only empirical criteria concerning virtuous dispositions that are available to persons other than the agent herself are behavioral—what the agent actually says and does. Yet identifying the possession of a genuine virtue in an individual requires knowledge beyond the observation of acts alone. In order to judge whether an action is virtuously motivated, we would have to answer questions concerning reasons for acting, counterfactuals, and the source of pleasure or pain taken in actions. (See MacIntyre 1991 on these criteria.) Virtuous actions are expressed in affections, intentions, and motivations as well as in empirical behavior. Their authenticity is dependent upon intangibles: reasons, desires, and beliefs. Of course, they must come to ground in action, but genuine virtues cannot be identified through actions alone. The claim that any individual practitioner is genuinely virtuous is therefore problematic on empirical grounds.

Consider the example of a naturally talented young basketball player coming from a cultural context in which the virtues are seldom on display. His coach is a virtuous person pursuing the internal goods of basketball, one of which is the good of helping young players learn the practice of basketball. The coach requires certain habits and behavior of all his players. This player loves to play basketball, and is pursuing the goods of basketball. The identity of these goods is not clear. Some are internal, such as the goods of running a play that results in the opportunity to score, of making a talented move, of adapting to the opponent's changing moves and plays, and of being a basketball player generally. Some goods are external, such as favor with admiring fans, material benefits, self-aggrandizement, and fame in victory.

The player learns quickly that in order to play in official games, which procure for him both internal and external goods in their purest form, he must please the coach by doing certain things. So he follows team rules concerning diet, curfews, exercise routines, and training sessions. He puts forth exemplary effort in drills, mastery of plays, and in giving verbal encouragement to his teammates.

The cultivation of the disciplines necessary to *appear* virtuous, however, does not amount to possession of the virtues. The information just mentioned is insufficient to discern whether he is displaying moral virtues in the practice of basketball. This is because, as noted, the virtues cannot be understood in strictly behavioral terms but are based in practical reason. So is our player virtuous?

A basketball player might be overly confident of his abilities, might be driven by angry rivalries to excel, or by irrational fears or desires. In actuality, of course, many of these conditions have been true for some of the best players of the game. If our player believed that he could be lazy in practice sessions and still both be permitted to play in official games and able to perform above average in his league, would he do so? Or, if he suddenly no longer enjoyed playing the game relative to

the pain he experienced in training, would he quit without further thought? If so, then what the player is displaying are not real virtues, despite appearances. But unless or until these problems arise, the simulacra of the virtues behind his actions would apparently suffice to participate in and contribute to a well-played game and the life of a hoopster. The appearance of the virtues suffices to produce for him *personally* the empirically verifiable internal goods of practices.

Habits are not virtues. We can be trained to respond in certain ways to certain situations. We do not have to depend on overcoming less-than-virtuous desires and emotions at every point in our daily routine. This can be a very good thing. An American soldier who served in Mogadishu described his experience in battle there as almost identical to his training, until people began falling down dead around him. His training permitted him the luxury of not needing genuine bravery at all times. To be sure, most armies strive to cultivate an ethic of courage in their soldiers, but they also go to great lengths to remove the need for genuine courage, through the cultivation of rote reactions. Military trainers know that for a soldier to take the time necessary to make a reasoned decision in combat is to give an advantage to an enemy acting by rote. They want to avoid the risk of depending on a character trait where a habit will suffice. Mere habit probably accounts for far more correct behavior than is often recognized. Habits *may* partly constitute the virtues, *if* we cultivate habits in reasoned judgment in the pursuit of right ends, but they need not do so. To identify the part of habitual action in genuine virtue requires an explication of the agent's reasons for cultivating the habit.

Natural dispositions are not moral virtues. As MacIntyre's own account of Aristotle mentions, the distinction between the results of moral disposition and those of natural disposition and talent is often a difficult distinction to make in practice. The qualities that we consider moral virtues are acquired, but people do not all start from the same baseline, it seems. Their backgrounds and even their genetic makeup seem to make some people more prone to act on good or bad reasons.

Certain physiological qualities lend themselves more to courage in some fields of endeavor than others. A soldier who is a talented athlete will usually have a higher baseline of confidence in single combat than a slow and awkward one, for example.

Virtues are not acts, but dispositions, relative to the good life. We do not possess a genuine virtue, if we genuinely possess it at all, unless we possess *consistently*. MacIntyre says that it is not possible to possess the virtues and possess them only occasionally. (198) We cannot have a given virtue if we do not have it consistently because, as explicated, to have a virtue is to have a settled disposition to pursue rightly-ordered goods—internal goods before external goods, for example—and to have such a disposition entails such consistency. To lack such consistency is to lack the disposition and therefore also to lack the virtue.

On the other hand, virtues are not dispositions held infallibly. Individuals display courage, justice, and honesty in *degrees*. I may not have displayed cowardice, or even mediocre levels of courage since, say, lunchtime yesterday. For me to claim to be a courageous person, however, is more problematic. We often have small failures in courage that have to be corrected after the fact, if they can be corrected at all. Our courage is also rarely tested in the extreme. And for important steps of courage, we speak of having to “summon our courage,” that is, of having to concentrate and carefully exercise the will to suppress our fears. We recognize that we could easily be other than courageous. No one is virtuous in an absolute sense. We know, for example, that even the bravest soldier will eventually break under torture and betray information.

To frame the point somewhat differently, we might ask whether children can be courageous. Surely the answer is that they can be, and often are, courageous. But children often fail in courage, in the course of moral maturation. Whether we possess the virtues is therefore not a binary decision, but has to be understood comparatively. As the

etymology of the English equivalent—“excellence”—shows, virtue is understood relative to social norms. (And compare 1984, p. 189.) In the land of the Ik, those who do not wantonly exploit their own children may seem morally outstanding.

History has many examples, some of them cited in *After Virtue*, of persons having produced great work and having lived the life of a practitioner—the two internal goods mentioned by MacIntyre—while behaving swinishly in other spheres of life. It is not unusual to see people acting nobly in one context and non-virtuously in another. Such persons can enjoy some of the internal goods of practices—their products and something of the life-of-a-practitioner. MacIntyre recognizes that there are vicious virtuosi and chess players and therefore that fully developed virtue is not required of every practitioner in order to sustain practices. Individuals can attain many of the goods of practices without the virtues. His claim, rather, is that the maintenance of practices depends on the widespread possession of genuine virtues by other practitioners. (193)

So in response to my worry, it might be claimed that MacIntyre’s argument applies only to the achievement of goods internal to practices as *socially cooperative activity*. Do my criticisms speak to *this* claim? Can practices be sustained without genuine virtues in a society of practitioners as a whole?

Simulacra in society

My argument concerning the difference between genuine virtues and their simulacra in the individual agent can be enlarged to a society as a whole. It is fairly obviously impossible to sustain a practice if its practitioners engage in rampant dishonesty, cowardice, and injustice. But as in the case of the individual, so also at the societal level—vices are not the only alternative imaginable to virtues. Might not the goods internal to practices be realized without *genuine* virtues?

In order to answer these and related questions, we need to see the place of practices in a larger conception of the good, and then see how various understandings of the virtues are related to that larger conception. It is this interrelatedness and its implications for morality that I want to emphasize. In so doing I hope to turn a seemingly minor distinction, the identification of genuine virtues over against their simulacra, into a major difference over what constitutes a genuinely moral life. I offer the following by way of preliminary and overlapping theses for subsequent development.

First, when practices are broadly defined, they already entail the other two stages of MacIntyre's argument—the narrative unity of a life and a social tradition.

Second, the qualities required to sustain practices may not entail justice in social structures according to the conceptions of the good life of rival traditions. For example, practices need not necessarily render justice to slaves, women, foreigners, or to anyone outside the circle of practitioners, or indeed even to those within the practice on the perspective of a rival tradition. The internal goods of the contemplative life as this life was conceived in Athens, for example, actually *required* a slave population tending after the menial requirements of existence, just as the life of a plantation owner and the goods associated with plantation life in the antebellum southern states in America *required* a slave population. Both are widely recognized to be unjust by most Western traditions today. As long as practitioners distribute goods consistently, and according to some established standard, and as long as novices and master practitioners accept this distribution as “the way we do things,” then internal goods as defined are realized. The virtue of justice as defined so far does not require us to ascertain the demands of justice as distinct from *this* socio-historical context. It *cannot* do so, since it is defined with respect to this given understanding of the goods of practices.

Third, although MacIntyre does not make reference to external goods other than money, power, and fame, I think that other external goods exist. And they are less morally tainted and therefore more problematic for our discussion than those he lists. For example, a man may play a sport or embark on a career, or marry, and excel in any such practice related to these activities just in order to please his father. Most of us do many things, and do them well, because they are socially expected of us. This is not quite what we think of as “prestige” but neither is it fully internal to the practice, if the reasons for excelling in the practice are not directly tied to the goods internal to the practice itself. The distinction between goods internal and external practices is further blurred in the case of honor. The goods of fame can be realized through many activities other than practices. But most practitioners do not want recognition from just anyone. They want it from their fellow practitioners.

On the other hand, and more positively, practices can and are practiced “for the sake of” goods more important than those of any one practice. And most virtuous practitioners understand that such a relationship is beneficial. At their best, the practice of football and chess, for example, contribute to a larger conception of the good. But if the goods internal to practices are achieved even partly for the sake of goods beyond practices, then the distinctions between internal and external goods, and therefore between dispositions defined with respect to them, are inadequate.

The following chapters will remove any ambiguity about the adequacy of the goods of practices as sufficient for the identification of genuine virtues. Because conceptions of the good life differ, the goods attributed to practices differ. Because the goods of practices and the conceptions of the good life that they partly constitute differ, the dispositions required to realize those goods and that life also differ. So, providentially, simulacra can attain many of the goods of practices. More to the point of my overall argument, however, it is the

ultimate end pursued that is determinative in the identification of genuine virtues.

THE GOODS OF PRACTICES AND THE GOOD LIFE

The rise and decline of practices, on MacIntyre's account so far, corresponds simply to the value in which the virtues are held. Left at this stage we would still not be able to resolve the kinds of incommensurable and interminable debates with which MacIntyre begins *After Virtue*. We could not resolve them even within a single practice. Rivalries and contending philosophies within practices have led one school or camp to de-legitimize the work of its rivals, calling into question the validity of the others' ends. I am not referring here to MacIntyre's later insight that a tradition is "an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition." (222) Such an argument is only possible within a tradition, when both parties hold nearly all their basic presuppositions in common, including most of the details concerning the ends of their particular tradition. The question, rather, is the place of a practice within one conception of the good life as compared and contrasted to its place in a rival tradition.

MacIntyre begins his account of virtue ethics with practices rather than a conception of the good life itself, he says, because he sees in practices the possibility of new ends and changing conceptions of ends. These discovered or rediscovered ends of practices will themselves partially define the good life. Our vision of the good life should be open to amendment. (273f) His point is well-taken and underlines the progressive and inductive aspect of our understanding of what the good life is on any account. My concern is that this scenario does not reflect the variety of outcomes possible from the encounter between practices and conceptions of the good life. MacIntyre makes the positive case from practices to the narrative integrity of a life, and the maintenance of a tradition. This could be misleading. We might conceive of practices narrowly and only with

regard to their own ends and excellences. We might view the ends of practices as contributing arbitrarily to the ends of life, such that the good life is defined as the sum of all those ends of practices that happen to be valued by humans. Reading his thesis today, we are given to think of theories of value pluralism written after *After Virtue*. (See Galston 1999 and Galston 2002.) A neo-Aristotelian structure can accommodate such an aggregate conception of the good, as we will see. But on the account so far, there are yet no objective reasons for counting the excellences of practices as high-ranking goods. The pleasures we take from achieving the excellences of practices here are only a step removed from the arbitrary distinction of higher and lower pleasures in Millian utilitarianism. The virtues are necessary to achieve the excellences of practices, he says. The excellences of practices are those that virtuous people enjoy. The pleasures supervening on these excellences are those pleasures that only virtuous people can know. But why then are these pleasures superior to others? Why are the virtues that are required for these excellences superior to other qualities? Most importantly, why should we value the goods and excellences internal to this or that practice above goods external to it, or above goods internal to some other practice? MacIntyre's account of practices explains the difference between roulette and poker, but it cannot explain why some accounts of the virtues would not consider poker a legitimate practice, though it otherwise meets all the criteria of his definition.¹¹

Without showing how they can contribute to a larger understanding of life, the ranking of those goods cannot be justified with criteria more sophisticated than utility. It is not just that without a comprehensive and coherent *telos* we are reduced to subjectivist choices *between* the conflicting allegiances of internal goods. (See pp. 201f.) We cannot even make an objective claim for the superiority of internal goods over external goods without reference to the larger good. Internal

¹¹ Other examples of problematic practices might include animal breeding and fur-farming, the visual arts (for Hasidic Jews); and nearly all religious practices.

goods make reference to a conception of the good life beyond the scope of practices. In their fullest expressions they grasp and express a larger sense of purpose than the practice itself. Because the goods of practices are qualified goods, goods for very specific reasons, the understanding of the ends and excellences of practices can contract as well as expand. Unless we have a sense of how they contribute to the larger understanding of life, their status as goods is suspect. I contend that there is a much stronger deductive link between a larger vision of life and practices that follow from it than MacIntyre can be interpreted as saying. Different conceptions of the good determine what counts as a virtue, what counts as an internal good, and therefore what counts as a legitimate practice. This opens wider the possibility that practices may be sustained by qualities less than the genuine virtues of a particular conception of the good. More importantly, it shows yet again that the identification of virtues is dependent on ends. This is the thrust of what I want to demonstrate now.

Specifically, the goods of practices cannot be rightly ranked or even individuated without reference to the comprehensive conception of the good in which they nest. Concentrating on medicine as my central example of a practice, I argue that it is the goods and excellences of practices that individuate them from other practices. It is the contribution of these goods and excellences to the realization of the good life that determines the ranking of the practice in that conception of the good life. The goods and excellences of a practice can be ranked so low that their goods, such as they are perceived to be, represent a constant threat to the realization of the good life because of their potential to interfere with all those goods of a higher rank. Or, on another tradition's ranking, they can lie at the very heart of the good life. For this and related reasons, it is probably more accurate to refer to the *practices* (plural) of, say, medicine. They are rival and incompatible practices, rather than a single practice, because they contribute variously to rival and incompatible conceptions of the good life.

We cannot have a coherent account of morality without a particular and exclusive conception of the good life. It will be part of the conclusion of Part One, however, that MacIntyre does not give one, nor does he give a theoretical structure constituting a reason for thinking that such a conception exists that is not solely the product of human will.

Before continuing, I should say more about the relationships possible between goods and *the good*.

The ultimate, not-necessarily-monolithic good

For the purposes of simplicity, to this point I have emphasized the means-to-ends relationship of virtues to the practices they serve. In this chapter and the next I argue for a similar relationship between practices and their individuating goods and excellences, on the one hand, and *the good* on the other. In chapter 6 I continue this argument for the relationship between virtues, integrated lives, and traditions and *the good*. Two objections to this relationship could be made. One frequent objection to the Aristotelian structure is that humans may rationally pursue many different ends as ends in themselves, rather than just a single ultimate end. (Anscombe 1957, sect. 21) And, second, I seem to be saying that virtues, goods, relationships, and practices are *only* instrumental. Both objections misinterpret my claims.

Aristotle's ethics famously begins with the claim that every rational action is taken in view of some end, and that there is some one ultimate end for the sake of which a rational agent always acts. He later argues that this end turns out to be *eudaimonia*. The notion that all actions are taken in view of one ultimate end is controversial to moderns. But Scott MacDonald (1990; 1991) has argued persuasively that most objections to Aquinas' account of rationality (and by inference, to Aristotle's account as well) misunderstand the

Aristotelian claim. I will adopt three of MacDonald's conclusions for my purposes.

First, MacDonald shows, the Aristotelian claim is a purely formal argument concerning the structure of all rational morality. This claim is prior to a substantive view concerning the ultimate end of all things, including Aquinas' own view that that end is happiness (Aquinas's *beatitudo/felicitas*; or Aristotle's *eudaimonia*). It is not based in empirical claims: this is the structure of *rational* action, not necessarily every action observable in the world. Why should we believe this to be the case?

Aquinas says that we only act in view of something that is desirable, either for itself or instrumentally. If every act pursues something either for itself or instrumentally, then there is at least one end to every chain of such things pursued. The chain cannot be infinitely long; otherwise nothing could provide an explanation of what moves rational desire. There is a stopping point to the motivation behind every action. Rational desire, or *will*, can only be explained by reference to something that is capable of moving the will in itself. The end cannot be, that is, something that is not desirable in itself. And so that stopping point cannot be just anywhere, either. The stopping point or end must be something that is desired without any further end in view. Any such end that is capable of moving the will in itself MacDonald calls a "weak ultimate end." (1991, p. 45) But Aquinas says that all actions of a rational human being are ultimately subordinate to a single such ultimate end. (*ST* 1-2.1.5-6) How are all actions taken in view of one ultimate end?

The second of the conclusions I take from MacDonald is that nothing in Aquinas (or Aristotle, by inference) commits Aquinas to the view that the ultimate end of a rational agent is monolithic, as the pleasure principle is monolithic in hedonistic utilitarianism, for example. The ultimate end of all action can be aggregate. When it comes to what they will later argue is the best candidate for that end—happiness,

Aquinas's *beatitudo/felicitas* or Aristotle's *eudaimonia*—this end can therefore be aggregate rather than monolithic. It is the view of Aquinas himself that the best candidate for *the* single ultimate end is in fact constituted of four weak ultimate ends *together*—pleasure, tranquility, primary natural goods, and virtue. (MacDonald 1991, p. 48) In view of MacDonald's explication, it is obvious how the objection to the apparently monomaniacal focus of the Aristotelian model on the ultimate end actually misunderstands Aquinas/Aristotle. *Eudaimonia* can be aggregate.

If an ultimate end, whether monolithic or aggregate, fulfills *all* a human being's rational desires, then MacDonald calls this the "strong ultimate end." The difference between "weak" and "strong" ultimate ends is comprehensiveness. A weak ultimate end may not satisfy all rational desires. The strong ultimate end, by definition, does do so. (MacDonald 1991, p. 46f.) The strong ultimate end need not be *determinate* in the way that, say, the hedonist conceives of it. It need not be a monolithic strong ultimate end. Those who argue for a monolithic end are saying that there is no weak ultimate end that is not also a strong ultimate end. As to the formal conception of the good on *any* rational account, Aquinas thinks that we might conceive of the strong ultimate end as an aggregate of weak ultimate ends. If the strong ultimate end turns out to be aggregate, the strong ultimate end is not reducible to weak ultimate ends however. The weak ends are desirable in themselves. Only the strong ultimate end satisfies all desires. (MacDonald 1991, p. 50)

The third conclusion of MacDonald's explication of Aquinas that has immediate relevance to my argument concerns the nature of the relationship of weak ultimate ends to strong ultimate ends.

MacDonald's exposition shows that there are at least three possible relationships of subordination. In addition to (1) merely instrumental subordination as a means to a desired end, there is (2) subordination as an end that is desired for itself (but also as a means to a further end), and (3) subordination-as-a-constitutive-part of the comprehensive

ultimate end, whether monolithic or aggregate. (MacDonald 1991, pp. 51-53)

In sum, MacDonald shows that the Aristotelian claim is a purely formal argument concerning the structure of morality, that the ultimate end is not necessarily monolithic, and therefore that the relationship of subordination of sub-ultimate ends need not be merely instrumental. MacDonald's insights into the Aristotelian ultimate end do not, however, weaken the need for a comprehensive conception of the good. The aggregate conception has the potential of conflict at every level. We cannot maximize every good. How do we combine them? Human flourishing, on any coherent account of the virtues, is more than a pastiche of practices moving toward an unknown end. It is only in a state of advanced cultural pluralism that a life seems little more than assemblages of discrete spheres of activity. Only from a larger frame of reference can these conflicts be resolved. And only by better defining a practice can we understand how practices are valued from such a frame of reference.

MacIntyre identifies two kinds of good internal to any practice, recall—the excellences of production and participation in the life-of-the-practitioner. I will consider in turn the relationship of each to a given tradition's conception of the good life and show that it is their contribution to this life that makes them goods and gives them their rank in that conception. The first step in this demonstration is to show that it is these goods that individuate practices.

Practices: individuated by goods and excellences

The excellences of production of a practice refer both to the whole of the craft as exercised and also to the products that result from that craft. A fine portrait is a good internal to portrait-making. It also represents one stage in the progress of the art of portrait making as it evolves toward greater and greater realization of the purpose and meaning of the art, MacIntyre says. And it may represent a step in the

transformation of the art's purpose and meaning as these are extended in previously unimagined directions and toward enlarged aspirations. The second kind of good internal to practices is participation in the life-of-a-practitioner, to whatever extent that life constitutes the agent's life. (189f.)

MacIntyre does not address the question of individuating practices, but we can reasonably conclude that it is their internal goods and excellences that differentiate one practice from another. The products of practices distinguish painting from sculpture, but also portrait-making from iconography, interior design from architecture, psychiatry from neurology, hunting from fishing, and chess from poker. Likewise, the life-of-the-practitioner distinguishes an actor from a circus performer, but also a therapist from a pastor, a naval captain from a privateer, and an elementary-school teacher from a parent of young children, in spite of the similarities in each pairing. Obversely, these practices do resemble each other because some of the products and some aspects of the life-of-the-practitioner are common to both practices in each pairing.

It is an important part of his argument that the goods of practices are not subjective; they rely on recognized standards of excellence. There *is* accounting for taste. Those who know, *know*. (190) MacIntyre may only mean here that a practitioner's subjective evaluation of the goods internal to practices will coincide with those of other practitioners, since he says that internal goods can only be appreciated by those initiated into practices. He may not be affirming that the goods of practices reflect a standard that transcends subjectivity, that is. In any case, I say to the contrary that the goods of practices are *not* universally recognized in their particulars and are variously valued in general. It is not just that there have always been rival schools of painting, philosophy, medicine, family life, and football. For all honest practitioners must admire technical proficiency in the products of their rivals, and all participate indisputably in the life-of-the-practitioner. Rather, it is that there is disagreement about what

constitutes excellence and *why* these are goods. To develop this observation, I have to say more about the two sorts of goods internal to practices.

The term “products” is too susceptible to narrow interpretation. It does not sufficiently distinguish internal goods from instances of technical proficiency. “Products” may misdirect our understanding by restricting what counts as internal goods. On the other hand, MacIntyre’s examples of products *do* seem to draw this distinction: portraits can reveal moral character, for example, and chess cultivates “analytic skill, strategic imagination and competitive intensity....” (188)

The other kind of internal goods MacIntyre identifies, what I am calling the “life-of-a-practitioner,” requires definition. While we know the difference between the life of a parent of young children and a schoolteacher, based on our experiences with the lives of these practitioners, what differentiates “life-of-a-practitioner” from “life-of-a-practitioner” within one person’s lifespan is not yet clear. The rest of this chapter will consider the example of medicine as a practice and the life-of-a-practitioner of a doctor.

The life of a doctor includes her experience of being a student and an intern; her relationships with patients, nurses, and administrators; the honor and place she occupies in society due to this profession and to the income that medicine provides; and the social and practical implications of the natural abilities necessary to meet the standards for becoming a physician (as compared and contrasted with those of a poet, a military officer, a jockey, or a mathematician). The experiences of each of these will also shape how the physician views life. The mental images we form of all these will necessarily include references to culture and history and geography. This all suggests a *role* rather than a life, with all the implications concerning a narrative and a *telos* that MacIntyre suggests from the concept of role in chapter 15 of *After Virtue*. To anticipate my conclusion, the story implied in

such a social role is not just a personal story or drama. Nor is it only a generalized role that can be understood as interchangeable between all cultures and societies, for it will not be possible to say enough about such a generalized role to resolve specific moral questions. Rather, the role must be understood within the context of a meta-narrative that shapes how we understand the personalized stories of Dr. Smith or Dr. Ammal.

What *are* the internal goods of the practice of medicine? The goods achieved by a health care professional might include a successful surgical operation, or a plaster cast that flawlessly aligns broken bones, or having comforted a distressed patient. Or they might include facing and overcoming difficulties or doing something that is difficult and rare and therefore valuable. Or advancing knowledge in medicine. Or they might include respect earned and participation in the professional community and beyond. Or helping a patient rethink his/her priorities. Or participating in the restoration of a patient to a productive life. Most practitioners seem to think that the latter goods are the more important goods of medicine. They contribute more to the purpose and ends of medicine.

What these generalizations obscure is the very important differences in why a good is a good, and even what counts as a good. The goods of practices are not in reality the same for practitioners across schools of what we might generally call medicine. Particular conceptions of the good life in a tradition shape what counts as a good in practices.

Goods and the ends they serve

By defining and individuating practices in terms of internal goods we can see that the ranking of the goods of practices is open to dispute.

Why are internal goods ranked higher than external goods? Following on MacDonald's explication, it turns out that they are superior to external goods because of their relative contribution to ends. External goods are goods. When pursued above internal goods, however, they

tend to undermine internal goods. Internal goods are instrumental (plaster casts, pharmaceuticals) or ends-in-themselves (doctor-patient relationships, normal bodily functions) that are also partly constitutive of the ultimate end. The ends of medicine include notions concerning the health of individuals and of society aggregately. We cannot do without an ever-widening context within which to assess our decisions.¹² They are internal goods because of their supposed contribution to the good life, and will be valued according to their relative contribution to that life.

Goods are not intrinsically valuable. To say that something has value necessarily implies that it has a *valuer*. We cannot do without evaluation. The objection that all humans value statistically normal bodily functions and freedom from pain begs the question of what constitutes normalcy. There are systems of thought that regard the body as largely irrelevant to human ends. I will touch on some of these. It is typical of cultural advancement and maturity to give sophisticated reasons, relative to the perceptions of the ends of life in that culture, for valuing internal goods. We have a rational desire for goods because we understand them as contributing more or less to our sense of the good life.

Some practices encompass a much broader portion of human life. To be a good parent, I think, implies most of what it means to be a good person. The goods of community life involve many types of relationships, and a harmonization of diverse personal ends, as well as the incorporation of many other practices. On Aristotle's account it is because the self-sufficient life of the *polis* just *is* the fulfilled vision of human flourishing that courage is fully exemplified in the act of the citizen soldier facing death for his country. Yet in every case, including this one, the criteria of virtue look to reasons beyond acts. Every constitutive element of a practice looks beyond the practice to larger ends. This would explain why, on MacIntyre's evaluation, some

¹² Charles Taylor introduces the concept of "hypergoods" for related reasons. (1989, pp. 71ff.)

practices flourish in the context of modernity (chess, farming) and others do not (politics, philosophy, social culture). It is because of their contribution to the good. The former constitute a small part of what human flourishing on any account entails, and so provoke less controversy concerning what a virtue looks like in action. The latter imply a much more specific and “thick” vision of life. A comprehensive *telos* is therefore necessary, even to validate virtues, goods, and practices. It is nothing less than a comprehensive conception of the good life that can identify and identify what are genuine virtues on that conception, as I will show in the next chapter. At present I want to look at examples of medicine to demonstrate that, beyond the technical proficiencies that MacIntyre rightly says are not fully practices, goods are not the same across practices.¹³

The historical and cultural examples I give below and have given to this point are not intended to point to *necessary empirical* facts of human behavior relative to goods, virtues, and practices as they relate to a particular conception of the good, as if to say that it is ever thus in historical traditions. I have no illusions that this is the case. Rather, I want to point to structural relationships in historical examples as a way of illustrating *the formal criteria of cogent practical reasoning* toward a given conception of the good life.

The products of medicine as goods

The examples of early Chinese medicine illustrate why the goods of medicine cannot be considered goods just with reference to practices alone.¹⁴ The goods of the practice of medicine may turn out to conflict

¹³ In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre explicitly makes the point I am making here, and attributes it to the tradition he seeks to defend there: “Aquinas too recognized the variety and heterogeneity of goods and, no more and no less than Aristotle, understood them as goods insofar as they were and in virtue of their being constituents of the kind of life directed to *the good and the best.*” (1988, p. 165)

¹⁴ A disclaimer is necessary here. One problem we face in comparing “medicine” as practices in one understanding of the world versus another is the question of what counts as a valid representation of the religion/philosophy. Since I have not “indwelt,” in the Polanyian

with the perceived higher-ranking goods of the culture in which the practice nests.

In China, the Three Teachings—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—have had a determinate role on their respective understanding of the goods of medicine. In the Confucian classic *The Great Learning*, Confucianism is presented as a series of eight interdependent steps that Peimin Ni translates as: “investigate things, extend knowledge, make the will sincere, rectify the heart-mind, cultivate the person, regulate the family, govern the state well, and bring peace to the world.” Each step is contingent on the preceding step, and each step necessarily follows from the preceding step. The fifth step, the cultivation of the person (*xiu shen*), functions as a transition between the internal/personal and the external/social. *Viewed from a proper understanding of xiu shen, Confucianism is a system of health care.* (Ni 1999, p. 28) The “heart-mind” (*xin*) of the fourth step and the “person” (*shen*) of the fifth both imply both the corporeal and the immaterial. The human being in Confucianism is embodied, not a mind or spirit in a shell. In contrast to the mind-body dualism Ni sees in the “Cartesian” (Western) approach to medicine, an approach tending to reduce health care to questions of the physio-chemical body, Confucianism views health holistically. The physiological, psychological, moral and social cannot be compartmentalized. (Ni 1999, pp. 29f.) And this does not only mean that the person is more than just physical, but that Confucian medicine concerns more than just the individual or the relationships between individuals. As Sun Si Miao said, “A superior doctor takes care of the state [nation], a mediocre doctor takes care of the person, an inferior doctor takes care of the disease.” (*Bei Ji Quian Jin Yao Fang*, vol. 1, cited in Ni 1999, pp. 30f.)

sense, any of the religions superficially treated here (Polanyi & Prosch 1975, p. 44), I am not competent to decide that question. Rather, my purpose here is simply to offer an explanation for how at least one social embodiment of each of these worldviews shapes the practice of medicine within that worldview.

When Confucianism emerged as the imperially-sanctioned ideology in the last two centuries BCE, it presented obstacles to the development of medicine. Confucianism orders society and the distribution of resources according to a set pattern. The open distribution of medical resources was perceived to threaten the social order in empowering non-traditional social structures. (Unschuld 1979, pp. 16f.) As a result, Confucianism long acted as a barrier to the advancement of excellence in medicine, at least by rival evaluations.

During this time, Confucians belittled the intellectual competence of medical practitioners. Confucianism places great value on scholarship.¹⁵ In this scheme medicine was a vocational recourse to those who could not pass the exams required to become a civil servant. Therefore to be a doctor was a position of inferior status. Those Confucians who had devoted themselves to the rigorous study of ancient literature and contemporary best practices of medicine found themselves culturally stranded. (Unschuld 1979, pp. 39-43)

Additionally, the practice of medicine was shaped by the Confucian ambivalence towards science. Here two basic tendencies stood in conflict. Confucianism was steadfastly rationalistic and opposed to superstition and all preternatural religion. While it actively endorsed traditional rites and ceremonies, it was dogmatically skeptical toward supernaturalism. Its doctrine was that of a cooperative society. People's true interests did not conflict but complemented one another. Social harmony was conceived in terms of a larger view of Nature and of harmony with the highest cosmological powers. By the time of Confucius, these powers no longer had the personal connotations they possessed in ancient times, and were reverently referred to simply as *Thien* (usually translated "Heaven"). In a context of demonological capriciousness, this conceptual scheme could have worked to the advantage of empirical science and medicine. Another tendency

¹⁵ "Confucianism" and "Confucians" are Westernisms. The self-designation *ju* simply means "scholar," and the followers of Confucius understood themselves as examples of scholarship. (Needham (1962, p. 1)

prevented this. Confucianism's focus on human affairs and society, rather than the non-human left natural science without intellectual patronage. Confucius fastidiously avoided the study of all natural phenomena such as comets, earthquakes, geysers, and tidal waves as having no bearing on issues of human society. Only man in his social dimension merited investigation. To the deep chagrin of scientists and Taoists, his disciples followed him in this prejudice for the next two thousand years. (Needham 1962, pp. 11-15) So the Confucian context of medicine minimized the goods of medicine understood on their own terms.

Though Confucianism subordinated the goods of medicine to those of social structure, it nevertheless integrated body and self holistically. This was not the case in the context of India. Indian philosophical and religious traditions generally view the human body and mind as fundamentally different from the true self in pursuit of its liberation. While we should not oversimplify this dualism, it does pose a problem for medicine. The care of the body simply does not carry the same meaning in Hinduism as in other understandings. Gregory Field argues that the health of body and mind are related to the self in a much different way than in monotheistic and materialistic conceptions, with their linear understandings of the self and human life. Moreover, the primacy of the virtue of spiritual purity in Hinduism prevented health care providers from crossing caste lines. Concern for spiritual integrity limited the scope of patients that the physician could serve. "Hinduism has a strong inclination to conceive of spiritual Self-realization or God-realization as entailing transcendence of physicality." (Field 2001, pp. 1, 5f.)¹⁶

¹⁶ Because Yoga, Ayurveda, and Tantra emphasize physicality, they are unusual in the Hindu context. It is not surprising that these three traditions of medicine are all "iconoclastic" within the larger Hindu conception of the body. (Field 2001, p. 8) Kenneth Zysk has argued that ayurvedic medicine owes its emergence to heterodox wandering ascetics living *outside* Brahmin society who could maintain relationships with all castes. In collaboration with Buddhist monks, they developed Ayurveda as a system of preventative health care. (*Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India* in Jonson 2000, p. 31)

Text cut off in original

way in which a practice will be perceived and ~~understood~~ ..
practiced. From a Western perspective, the social environment stifled the practice of medicine in these instances. Their conceptions of human flourishing or “health” in the broadest possible sense put a lower value on certain goods of medicine in a narrow sense. In Confucianism, the goods of corporeal well-being were inferior to the goods of traditional social stability and harmony, and so had to be sacrificed when the two sets of goods clashed. In Hinduism, the caste system and the understanding of spirituality and physicality combined to push medicine to the social margins.

For the same sorts of reasons, the ultimate commitments of a particular community may also *promote* the development of goods associated with medicine. Taoism offers an example. Joseph Needham credits iatro-chemical advances in Chinese medicine to Taoism’s belief in a material immortality as the ideal end of the human being. The ghostlike images flitting along valleys and woods in many paintings of Chinese landscapes portray persons having achieved this state, perpetually enjoying the beauties of nature on earth in ethereal form. One arrives at this state through exercises, sexual practices and exposure to the wind and the sun. Because of their philosophical and

Vedic religion, as Albert Jonsen explains, designates three social classes in strict segregation from each other: the priestly class of the Brahmans; the secular ruling class of the Ksatriyas; and the Vaisyas occupying the roles of artisans, herders and farmers. Below these three classes are the Shudras, servants of the upper classes, and finally the impure or untouchables. These classes are subdivided into castes based on their origin, work, and religious practices. A whole system of rules governs relations between these castes, and infraction of these rules constitutes spiritual pollution. Early Vedic texts prohibited Brahmans from practicing medicine. Eventually persons from every caste were allowed to become physicians, but Brahman physicians could not come into contact with the dead or with bodily excretions even then. Nor could doctors from one class take patients belonging to a class or caste with which interaction was prohibited. Physicians eventually became a caste unto themselves in which medicine as a practice was passed down through families. (Jonsen 2000, p. 31)

The Flourishing Life and the Good Life

What the development of medicine in the cultural environments of early Confucianism and Hinduism illustrates is that a given conception of human flourishing can have a negative influence on the

magical/scientific attitudes towards sex in particular, we find references dating from the third century BCE of the effects of ingesting urine on sexual health and activity. In texts from the eleventh to the sixteenth century CE an entire field of pharmacology developed around the processing of urine. There can be no doubt that these advances in urine therapy were closely tied to the ends of Taoism. (Needham 1970, p. 285)

While it is probably true that “everyone wants health,” it is not the case that all cultures put the same value on “health” relative to other goods, and this is ultimately due to differences in understanding about what “health” means. Not every tradition can provide the practice of medicine with the social capital necessary to develop as it will elsewhere.

The ends of medicine therefore imply highly particular understandings of what “health” means in the larger society and how health is procured. The Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization states, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (Field 2001, p. 47) Gregory Field has emphasized that an adequate understanding of health must include a broad range of determinants: biological and ecological determinants (such as life, development, and longevity, equilibrium, environmental adaptation, non-susceptibility/resistance/immunity, vitality, endurance, relaxation); medical and psychological determinants (normality including social values such as whether homosexuality is normal, freedom from pain, wholeness and integration, awareness and mental clarity), socio-cultural and aesthetic determinants (relationality, creativity, and the ability to produce offspring, enjoyment); and metaphysical and religious determinants (such as self-identity, freedom). (Field 2001, pp. 50-77) The understanding of health can be further complicated by the ways in which humans have adapted to statistical abnormalities, such that some without the sense of hearing,

for example, can contend that this condition is not in fact a disability. “Health” therefore has a particular, culture-specific meaning.

For this reason Nietzsche declared that the concept of normal health should be abandoned, because health for the body, not to mention the soul, “depends on your goal, your horizon, your energies, your impulses, your errors, and above all on the ideals and phantasms of your soul.” (*Gay Science*, 177, cited in Field 2001, p. 61) We can refuse to abandon a conception of normal health, albeit a conception open to amendment; we cannot avoid recognizing that health has to be considered as a function of our larger understanding of life. The meaning of the material and the body, the meaning of the social, and the relative understanding of excellence all constrain the development of the practice of medicine. Different conceptions of the good lead to differences in the ends of practices, and at just those points in which the vision of the good life is most different, the practice of medicine also will be most different.

In sum, the status of the products of practices as goods depends on the contribution of those products to the good life. The same is true of the second sort of goods internal to practices, the life-of-a-practitioner.

The life-of-a-practitioner as a good

Just as the products of medicine proper were held in low esteem in Confucianism, so also was the life-of-a-medical-practitioner as such. Confucianism emphasizes social stability, the family and the virtue of filial piety. It is the obligation of the family to care for its own, and especially to care for the elderly. In 1522, Yü Pien quoted the Confucian scholars of the Sung time:

Whoever leaves the cure of diseases to common physicians [*yung-i*] neither possesses compassion, nor does he fulfill his duties toward his parents. The knowledge of medicine is indispensable in the assistance of one's relatives [*shih-ch'in*!] All the renowned physicians of former times started practicing medicine because their mothers fell ill. (Cited in Unschuld 1979, p. 57)

Some rudimentary medical knowledge was part of the general education of any good Confucian. (Unschuld 1979, pp. 17f) The professionalization of medicine threatened to undermine the bonds between family members.

The Confucians also saw the professionalization of medical practitioners as a destabilizing force in society at large. One historical precedent especially worried them. Movements based on the philosophy of Lao-tzu (604-? BCE), later evolving into Taoism, began in the second century BCE. Their social foundation and economic strength were centered in medical resources considered unorthodox by Confucians. Curing patients by spiritualistic rituals, they took payment in pounds of rice per year. The influence of these movements spread to the point of becoming a theocratic state-within-the-state of China. Confucian historians believed that this phenomenon had led to the fall of the Han dynasty (25-220 CE) and this incident formed the basis for the Confucian misgivings concerning the legitimacy of a distinct body of physicians within society. Confucian officials concluded that they must gain control over medical resources in order to maintain control over the material and non-material goods produced by those medical resources. One means of so doing was to assimilate the best physicians. Successful treatments at the imperial court were followed by the elevation of the physician to the status of civil servant, thus politically co-opting his professional group of origin, which would otherwise have gained status from his success. (Unschuld 1979, pp. 18-21) Thus the life-of-a-doctor, as such, was held in low regard.

Buddhism offers a contrasting example. Medicine had a favored status in Buddhism from its beginnings, also for reasons relating to larger questions of the meaning of life. The Nepalese prince in the sixth century BCE who founded Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, was also known as the “Great Physician.” In a philosophy/religion in which all of life is perceived to be suffering, compassion for the sufferer is seen as the highest virtue. In Mahayanist Buddhism, wisdom and duty actually pushes the enlightened, the *bodhisattvas*, who have achieved perfection, to delay their own elevation in order to alleviate the suffering of others. (Jonsen 2000, p. 31)

The ranking of a life-of-a-medical-practitioner, too, as a good is therefore a function of how much this good is perceived to contribute to whatever we understand of a good life taken as a whole. And, specifically, it is a function of how much the life-of-a-practitioner contributes to the good life for the individual.

Good doctor, good human?

Another way to approach these questions is by asking about the relationship between what it is to be a good doctor and what it is to be a good person. A good person who dabbles in medicine, for example, may not be particularly competent at it. But can a person be a good doctor without being a good person? The answer to this question is complex and will lead us into the next chapter and a more careful consideration of the identification of the virtues. While being a good practitioner and being a good man are not coterminous, I will argue that the valuation of both will be decided with reference to a particular tradition’s understanding of the good life. Consequently, a doctor can only be a good doctor to the extent that s/he functions in accord with that tradition’s particular vision of the good and to the extent that that vision of the good can be realized in the practice of medicine.

The criteria for deeming a practitioner to be good originate partly from the practice itself and partly from outside the practice. Within

any practice there are current standards of excellence and a doctor must meet them. Research in science comes to provisional conclusions and experience suggests that some technologies are more effective than others. Excellent practitioners will apply this knowledge. Decisions about bioethics and the ends of medicine do not generally come from practitioners, however, but from the surrounding culture and, systematically, from philosophers and theologians who articulate the philosophies and religions at the heart of culture. A practice itself provides limited resources for discerning its own ends; practitioners work with the ends they are given. It is for this reason that prior to the eighteenth century, theology was known as the “queen of the sciences” in the West. (This title is now apparently claimed by mathematics, or sometimes physics, if it is claimed at all, and for very different reasons.)

How much difference is there really, between, say, a good Muslim doctor and a good liberal doctor? The difference is great, and it turns on their difference over what constitutes a good life.

Hassan Hathout explains how medicine is understood within the context of Islam: “The overall goal of the *Shari’a* is the fulfillment of the welfare of the people by ensuring the satisfaction of their needs, which are technically categorized as indispensable needs, basic needs, and complementary needs, in that order of significance.” (Hathout 1992, pp. 59f, 62)

Those “indispensable needs” include many things directly related to Islamic beliefs.¹⁷ Because they are indispensable, medicine is

¹⁷ Indispensable needs are those without which human life would be unbearable or chaotic. There are five indispensable needs, namely, the preservation of self (life, health, procreation, nourishment, curing illness, hygiene, etc.); mind (psychological health, relief from stress, avoiding alcohol and drugs, etc.); religion (faith, worship, prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, almsgiving, morality and ethics, etc.); ownership (sanctity of private ownership, legitimate pursuits of wealth, contracts, legitimate commercial relationships, prohibition of stealth, fraud and usury, social functions of capital, etc.); and honor (chastity, prohibition of adultery and sexual offense, marriage and family laws, social conduct, combating moral pollution, etc.).

therefore concerned with satisfying these needs, and a doctor is not free, in an Islamic society, just to leave these to individual discretion.¹⁸ The Islamic Code of Medical Ethics (ICME), adopted at the First International Conference on Islamic Medicine held in Kuwait in January 1981, engages the doctor in larger issues of social welfare and demands governmental involvement in the formation of social morals:

The Doctor's mission exceeds the treatment of disease to taking all measures to prevent its occurrence....

The Medical Profession shall take it as duty to combat such health-destructive habits as smoking, uncleanness, etc. Apart from mass education and advertence, the Medical Profession should unrelentlessly [*sic*] pressurize the judiciary to issue necessary legislation.

The combat and prevention of environmental pollution falls under this category.

Each of these is covered by a complete set of moral injunctions as well as prescribed laws. (Hathout 1992, p. 62)

¹⁸ According to Hassan Hathout, a number of principles guide Muslim medical ethics as a sub-discipline of *Shari'a*, of which I will mention the most important in order to sharpen the simplistic picture of Muslim bioethics I am forced to draw here. First, necessities overrule prohibitions. "If something is prohibited by *Shari'a* but under certain conditions it becomes necessary, for example to preserve life or cure illness, then the prohibition is waived for as long as necessary." The starving may eat pork, the sick are exempted from fasting, but only as long as it is a necessity. (1992, p. 64) In addition, the lesser of two harms should be chosen: "Taking a heart from a cadaver for transplantation is better than leaving the recipient to die. Sacrificing a pregnancy by abortion becomes lawful if the continuation of pregnancy threatens the life of the mother." (1992, p. 64) And "The Summary Rule: Wherever Welfare Goes, There Goes the Law of God." "This is the summary rule for issues not mentioned in the Quran or *Sunna* [Tradition of the Prophet] and which do not lend themselves easily to intelligent reasoning by analogy or the unanimity of all scholars of the Muslim nation in a certain era. Whatever is found to be in the best interests of the nation, provided it does not conflict with the essence of religion or the statutes of the *Shari'a*, can confidently be legislated." (1992, p. 64)

The natural prophylaxis against venereal diseases and the other complications ensuing upon sexual license lies in revival of the human values of chastity, purity, self-restraint and refraining from advertently or inadvertently inflicting harm on self or others. *To preach these religious values is 'Preventive Medicine' and therefore lies within the jurisdiction and obligation of the medical profession.* [Emphasis added.] (Islamic Code of Medical Ethics 2006)

The practice of medicine must conform to the demands of *Shari'a*. The ICME laments the contrast between medical opposition to smoking, saccharine, fat, and so forth, and the liberal attitude that in sexual matters, “a doctor should not moralize but just treat.” (2006)

On this interpretation of Islam, it follows necessarily then that if a Muslim doctor limits his efforts in the prevention of venereal disease, for example, to promoting prudential measures such as condoms, dental dams, and encouraging his patients to know the relevant information about their sexual partners, he is not a good doctor in this respect. He is preventing disease, or at least offering measures for the prevention of disease given his patients' ends as they perceive them. He is not directing his patients toward health in the broadest sense. A sexually promiscuous man cannot be a healthy (Muslim) man, and therefore cannot be a good (Muslim) man in this respect. A doctor who enables, rather than discourages, promiscuity may be technically competent, but is not good.¹⁹

These ends will be partially defined by the correlative conception of the good life, the submission of human life to the law of Allah. We might conclude that a good doctor is one in service of what one Islamic theologian calls “*homo Islamicus*.” (Seyyed Hossein Nasr

¹⁹ Of course a technically incompetent doctor is not a good doctor either. He may be incapable even of taking effective measures for promoting proper biological functioning of the body according to current levels of health care. So neither is he moving his clients toward the proper ends.

[undated]) While the Muslim doctor must treat anybody in need, the idea of facilitating the life of an autonomous person in the tradition of liberalism is positively repulsive to the good Muslim of many Islamic traditions. Therefore, while a good doctor may not be a good Muslim in the fullest sense, a doctor is only a good doctor to the extent that he is a good Muslim with regard to the ends of the practice of medicine.

What this example illustrates is that the evaluation of whether a doctor is a good doctor is subordinate to the evaluation of what it is to be a good human for that tradition. A good doctor may not be a good human in the fullest sense, but a doctor is only a good doctor to the extent that s/he is a good human with regard to the ends of the practice of medicine. If the goods and ends achieved by a doctor are not compatible with our understanding of the good life, then we cannot judge that person to be a good doctor. S/he does not fulfill the role of a doctor in society.

Why is this necessarily, rather than just frequently, the case? Why is it necessarily, rather than just coincidentally, the case that the products of practices are ranked with respect to a comprehensive understanding of the good life? Ultimately, it is necessarily the case for both for the same sort of reason that the three-part Aristotelian structure identified by MacIntyre is necessary for a coherent account of the virtues. That is, just as virtues are virtues because they enable the realization of a *telos*—goods internal to practices—so too the goods internal to practices are goods *because* they enable the realization of a broader *telos*, what it is to be a good person. What it is to be a good person, in turn, is a function of our understanding of the good life from the perspective of the community.

Now, this conception of what life ought to be cannot be merely the cumulative total of all the goods internal to practices, for the same sort of reason that distinguishes goods internal to practices from goods external to them. We can rightly be indiscriminate in assignation of

goodness. All are goods.²⁰ All do not contribute equally to the good life. In a finite and temporal world, not all goods can or should be maximized. Goods conflict with goods for scarce resources of time and priority. In this sense, even the realization of internal goods is a zero-sum game. Goods have to be ranked, and to rank them wrongly is to cause evils by realizing lesser goods at the cost of diminishing higher goods.

Consider, for example, the difference in the value of life in Roman Catholic and Jewish thinking and its impact on medical ethics. Though the two systems of thought have a common biblical heritage, and the Christian scriptures portray life as a gift from God, the Christian tradition does not set the preservation of human life at the highest level of moral obligation. Writing particularly on the issue of the prolongation of life, Pius XII drew on the overarching principle that “all temporal activities are in fact subordinated to spiritual ones.” (“The Prolongation of Life” *The Pope Speaks*, IV, 395, cited in Bleich 1979, p. 12) Since life is not an overriding value, Catholic moralists teach that only ordinary means of saving life are obligatory: those “that do not involve any grave burden for oneself or another.” (Bleich 1979, p. 12) Nevertheless, sacrificing oneself for another represents an ideal, an expression of supererogatory saintliness and in particular of the virtue of love.

Jewish cosmology, in contrast, sees the value of every life as immeasurable and this difference has practical implications for medical ethics. Mishna Sanhedrin, commenting on Genesis 4.10, renders the following exegetical observation, which has become foundational to Jewish ethics:

²⁰ A more complete account would follow Augustine and his heirs in arguing that, at some level, everything that *is* should be understood as good in one sense. I assert this position more explicitly later in my surveys of Anselm and Duns Scotus.

It says not ‘the blood of thy brother,’ but *The bloods of thy brother*—his blood and the blood of his posterity.... Therefore but a single man was created in the world, to teach that if any man has caused a single soul to perish from Israel Scripture imputes it to him as though he had caused a whole world to perish; and if any man saves alive a single soul from Israel Scripture imputes it to him as though he had saved alive a whole world. (*Mishnah* 4:5, cited in Green 1982, p. 113)

Jewish ethics puts an obligation on every Jew to help those in need. Charitable financial giving to the point of sacrifice is mandatory. But rabbinic teaching expresses doubts that it is even *permissible* for one person to risk his or her life for another. At the limit a person may sacrifice a limb for another person, though this is not required, and is viewed as saintly behavior. One who risks his or her life for another is a “foolish saint” who “brings destruction on the world” and “dangerous heroic acts are largely discouraged by the mainstream of Jewish teaching.” A person who lays down her life for another is not a model of saintly behavior. (Green 1982, pp. 113-117)

Both the Jewish and Catholic positions differ from the Confucian understanding of sacrifice. Because Confucians see the care of one’s parents as among the highest goods, children have donated kidneys for transplant to their aging parents in poor health, and those parents have accepted the arrangement as proper and noble. Both Jewish and Christian understandings of medicine, I suspect, would recoil from this reasoning. What Jewish, Catholic, and Confucian doctors and patients consider right in the matter of organ donation correlates to their respective ranking of goods. The ranking of goods is the most basic difference between rival conceptions of the good life. It is also the factor distinguishing practice of medicine from practice of medicine.

Schmoctoring and rival practices of doctoring

How great are the differences between conceptions of medicine? To this point I have been highlighting differences in practices, trying to make the case that what we commonly call “the practice of medicine” is actually quite different across cultural boundaries. These differences are limited, it might be objected, by what humans share. We are neither Venusians nor Borg nor angels. Our common needs include oxygen, water, nutrition, and minerals in quantities with very small tolerances. We are carbon-based life forms, mammals, *homo sapiens*. There seems to be no basis in biology for racial distinctions. We are born, mature, reproduce, and gestate under a set range of variables. We are adapted to and dependent upon the conditions of life on the planet Earth. We have a rather rigid upper limit to our lifespan. We are vulnerable in nearly identical ways. Many surgical procedures, techniques, and treatments followed in practicing medicine will be nearly identical, if attitudes toward the physical are comparable. Practices originate and develop between the world of the practical and some larger understanding that imposes patterns on the practical. There is a limit to how medicine can practicably evolve.

My response, given the range of attitudes toward physical flourishing cited in the examples above, is that there might as well be no such practical limits.

The differences are important enough to suggest that there is not just *the* practice of medicine across cultural contexts. If it is their goods and excellences that individuate practice from practice; if the ends of medicine differ by cultural context; if the host culture shapes and encourages, or thwarts and stifles the practice; and if health care can be a conception of the good life writ small, then are we discussing the practice (singular) of medicine? No, we are discussing practices (plural) of medicine. Or practices that have similarities to the practice of medicine, as the practice of rugby and American football have similarities.

In a footnote of *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Robert Nozick introduces the concept of “schmoctoring.” If the practice of doctoring implies exclusive rules and ends, then call “schmoctoring” the practice of medicine in which the end is making money. (Nozick 1974, p. 235n) Refining the distinctions, Arthur Applbaum has called attention to the fact that the ends of many vocations filled by professionally-trained physicians—insurance company examiner, expert witness, company doctor—conflict with the obligations traditionally associated with the role of a doctor.

For example, in 1956 John Zimmerman was responsible for an auto accident in which David Spalding was seriously injured. In the course of a subsequent lawsuit, Zimmerman’s company sent Spalding to their doctor for examination. This doctor discovered an aortic aneurysm, perhaps related to the accident, but unknown to Spalding and his doctors. Both the doctor and the lawyer working for Zimmerman’s side in the case had hidden Spalding’s condition from him. Spalding settled the lawsuit involving the auto accident out of court for \$6,500. His condition was later discovered. Spalding petitioned to have the earlier settlement set aside, suing that the lawyer had improperly withheld information. The settlement was set aside, but no impropriety was found in the company doctor or the lawyer, because of their adversarial position in the case. Applbaum argues that the doctor in the case had a moral obligation to inform Spalding of his condition. On the other hand, Applbaum also says that if a physician working in these non-traditional roles does not lie, cheat, steal, coerce or otherwise violate her “pre-professional” moral obligations, *and if she informs her clients that she is not “doctoring,”* then she is ethically free to pursue other ends than those of the traditional doctor. (Applbaum 1999)

Nozick’s and Applbaum’s distinctions between doctors with differing ends are similar to my conclusions. The practices—plural—of medicine described so far will look to persons from rival conceptions of the good life much as a schmoctor looks to a person needing a

doctor. But the disconnect will actually be much greater. For a schmooctor has a role to fill in the practice of schmooctoring within a tradition's conception of the good, and can well fulfill that role as long as she does not assume the role of doctoring. A schmooctor may be a good schmooctor on any tradition's conception of the good. But the doctor of one practice of medicine cannot be a good doctor, without qualifiers, according to a rival practice of medicine. A liberal doctor, for example, will treat a patient with a view to a much broader range of personal autonomy than a doctor holding conservative Islamic beliefs. The beliefs of the liberal doctor will, I think, reflect rather the approach to medical ethics by Pellegrino and Thomasma:

A right and good healing action is the aim of both the doctor and the patient. The right or correct action is what is scientifically and technically appropriate. But the action also must be morally good, that is, *it should be in the interests of the patient*. 'Interests' include not only the medical good, that which medical knowledge dictates, but also the good as interpreted by the patient *in terms of his own values, lifestyle, aspirations, religious beliefs, and so on*. (1993, p. 86; emphasis added)

I examine this approach more closely in the next chapter. Pellegrino and Thomasma cheerfully assume here that if this individual doctor and this individual patient concur on the patient's interests, then an ethical outcome is assured. That is, they assume that the ends of medicine can be adequately understood as the treatment of perceived dysfunction on a purely contractual understanding of the relationship between patient and doctor. Rather than the attainment of health on any objective and comprehensive understanding, medicine in this conception would only concern itself with uniting technical competence and a health-related obstacle to whatever the patient perceives as his good. This is not in fact what is intended by the authors, as we can infer from objective limits they import elsewhere,

but they are ignoring the cases of conflicting goods for which medical ethics are required if they assume that the patient's understanding of his ends are compatible with the ends of medicine as the doctor understands them.

On every previous conception of medicine considered above—Confucian, Taoist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish—the patient and doctor are not the sole determinants of the patient's interests. And the same is true even for a liberal understanding of medicine. A liberal doctor is in the position of being able to embrace a broader range of ends than many others, and in a context of plural society, this gives the doctor a distinct advantage in forming political alliances concerning acceptable medical ethics. Yet even so, a patient might wish a liberal doctor to take some action that the doctor cannot accept, on a liberal understanding of the ends of life and therefore of medicine—a circumcision or clitorrectomy, for example, in some forms of Islam, or the amputation of a healthy limb—even should the patient believe that such a measure will help him/her realize her true self. (See Elliot 2000 on apotemnophilia.)

Or on the Aristotelian model, an immature or otherwise less-than-fully virtuous patient may come to believe later that her prioritization of goods at the time of her interaction with the doctor were not *what they should have been* and so that the doctor did not in fact serve her true interests, but only her desires and perceived interests at the time. A mature patient may understand her interests in relationship with the interests of community interests and *not* as a decision to be made autonomously, as the Pellegrino/Thomasma model would encourage her to do. She may believe that the doctor's role ought to have been to advise her within the context of her modified understanding of the good life. In such situations, the doctor was not a good doctor. The practice of medicine is not the same for doctor and the patient on her revised understanding. My interest here is not how to resolve such a problem. I want to point to its existence and inevitability in contexts of cultural plurality, and to note that only the comprehensive frame of

reference provided by an understanding of the good life can arbitrate such a conflict between doctor and patient.

What does a practice look like *without* a coherent understanding of the good life? If the goods of practices are not understood relative to their contribution to *the* good life in the ways that I have described, then those goods cannot be ranked relative to other goods. As a result those goods can easily become hegemonic in the lives of practitioners. They can eclipse or supplant other ends of life.²¹

Practices produce goods. A tradition will evaluate those goods based on prevailing religious, philosophical, or ideological conceptions of the good life. As a result, the practice develops and flourishes, or struggles and languishes, through the goods it produces in dynamic relationship to *the* good. A cultural “feedback loop” is established. Valued goods are rewarded materially and socially. Lowly-ranked goods are greeted negatively, ensuring the inferior status of the practice socially. When a practice is not perceived as contributing significantly to human flourishing, it cannot easily excel and therefore cannot easily produce goods that can be appreciated outside the narrow bounds of the practitioners. As the goods and excellences of the practice develop, the products and the practitioner herself will

²¹ Take the example of the goods of medicine yet again. Patient X has conditions a, b, c, d, and e. Medical technology can competently treat each of these conditions, if they are seen as pathologies. Because the techniques of medicine *can* provide certain goods, doctors often assume that they *should* do so. Eric Cassell says that physicians are “a pragmatic group devoted to action” who tend to view patients as bundles of problems to address. (Cassell 1994) Pellegrino and Thomasma add, “Oftentimes the technological imperative leads physicians to equate the patient’s best interest solely with the medically indicated course of action in such cases, rather than with values the patient may profess.” (1988, p. 93) Without a large view of the good life, other goods and excellences cannot compete with internal goods in the context of practices. Where a practice such as medicine is not subordinated to the ends of a larger understanding of the good, the practice eventually supplants those ends, becoming a vision of the good in itself. More than one observer has remarked on the ways in which the secularization of medicine has coincided with an elevation of medicine in the West, and particularly psychiatry, to the role of religion. Paul Vitz (1977/1994) makes a plausible case that secularized psychology constitutes another religion altogether, replacing sin with psychological dysfunction, mental health with salvation and God with self. See also Roy Branson (1973).

assume a place and meaning in society based on considerations far beyond the practice.

Practices develop in social contexts. Social cohesion is only possible within some shared understanding of common ends. So these social contexts embody understandings of the good life, each with a matrix of valuations. While this ordering of goods changes over time, the stability of a society is a function of the stability of its priorities and pattern of valuations. Sports, games, crafts, sciences, and literature all have a history, and that history is, among other things, the record of the interaction of the practice with the broader culture, or cultures.

The practice of medicine therefore must be understood within the framework of the good life. In any such structure of thought, the physical flourishing of the human body is understood as having a meaning, a role, and a value relative to the whole and to the constitutive parts of the whole. Understandings of this meaning and role and value differ widely.

Goods, practices, and even, as we will see next, the virtues themselves should not be conceived of as freestanding. An account of the virtues reflects a specific and comprehensive understanding of the good life and of *the* good. And we are a step closer to the inescapable question of whether there *is* any substance to the formal conception of the good that is independent of human will.

VIRTUES AND THE GOOD LIFE

In the last chapter I said that the ranking of goods internal to practices is a matter of their relationship and contribution to *the* good. If actions and dispositions to act are defined with respect to the ends of practices that they enable²², such that the virtues are the qualities necessary for attaining goods internal to practices, then we should ask how it is that some of these same virtues have a parallel relationship to the good life taken as a whole. Virtues are not powers that can serve all ends equally—external ends as well as internal ends—because genuine virtues, as contrasted with their simulacra, are partially defined as those powers that aim at internal goods. Genuine virtues, on any conception, have to do with exclusive motivations and dispositions. It just so happens that those personal qualities that enable the excellences of practices within a tradition are also those that enable an integrated life and the maintenance of a tradition. How is it that the same quality of character, the necessary means to the excellences of practices, excellences defined *exclusively*, also contribute to an *exclusive* understanding of an integrated life, as well as to a particular and *exclusive* tradition? What accounts for this coincidence? Why do genuine virtues *necessarily*, rather than fortuitously, enable both practices and also the good life as a whole?

My aim here is to show how the virtues relate to the good life, and to argue that an account of the virtues thus understood is more coherent and less susceptible to contradiction than the composite we have if we start with practices. But because of this relationship, virtues cannot be transferred from one conception of the good to another. And one conception of the good life will require virtues that are gravely defective on other understandings.

²² See chapter 4 above on the not-necessarily-monolithic-good.

Looking down the road in the development of my argument, the concepts necessary to understand how a genuine excellence (virtue) on one conception could be a mere simulacrum on another will open up a crucial distinction. It is the distinction between what is natural and necessary in human acts and dispositions, over against what is accidental/contingent. Moving forward into Part Two, it is a distinction that, coupled with a corresponding distinction in the ends of human life, is going to give us a better account of morality than the anthropocentric model considered thus far.

I begin by showing, in the following example, that the practice of medicine must draw on ends external to that practice in order to specify the shape of the dispositions associated with the ends of medicine.

The virtues of practices and ends beyond practices

In *The Virtues in Medical Practice*, Edmund Pellegrino and David Thomasma take a teleological approach to bioethics, tying the virtues of medicine “as a practice” to the ends of medicine. They explicitly refer to the thinking of Anscombe and MacIntyre as antecedents to their project. They avoid adopting a particular conception of the good for humankind as a point of reference, however, but instead consider those virtues necessary for “the special relationship that sickness and the response to illness creates between healer and patient.” (1993, p. xii) Their project is an attempt, in part, to exemplify how “the virtues of medicine are derivable from the nature of medicine as a human activity” and “that the derivation of the physician’s virtues from the ends of medicine helps us to escape some of the difficulties inherent in a ‘free-standing’ virtue ethic.” (1993, p. xiii) They want to tie virtues to the ends of medicine, rather than trying to argue for the virtues as independent of such ends. But they do not want to tie them to a larger conception of the good. Thus, they provide an ideal case study for the theoretical inadequacies that I am considering in this chapter and the next.

Pellegrino and Thomasma give two reasons for not taking a position on the particularities of the good life. First, they say, medicine should not be subject to the whims of the society in which it is found. Second, when a culture becomes pluralistic, the moral basis erodes, *and so an independent basis for bioethics must be found*. As rival traditions intersect in the moral community of medicine, it becomes difficult for the profession to police itself. Rather than abandoning the medical ethics to the larger and less understanding society, the profession should find ends of medicine that function as the *telos* of modern medicine. Specifically in looking at the doctor-patient relationship and the virtues that this relationship requires for healing to occur, they hope to define “the internal morality of medicine.” (1993, pp. 51-52) “We can define, with some hope of agreement, what the ends of medicine are. The ultimate end is the health of individuals and society, while the more proximate end is a right and good healing action for a specific patient.” (1993, p. 86) Thus the virtues necessary for the successful practices of medicine look only to the ends of medicine.

I think this project fails. Despite their many insights, the authors do not make a case for the moral virtues as necessary for the practice of medicine that is separable from a particular conception of the good life. It is not clear that MacIntyre should be blamed for the failure, since the argument runs counter to many of his conclusions. In more than one essay, MacIntyre refers explicitly to the field of medicine to exemplify the impasse of modern ethics. (1975; 1979) On the other hand, he might possibly be responsible for the misguided attempt by Pellegrino and Thomasma, since it is not always clear in MacIntyre’s critique of modern medicine that a conception of the good life is necessary to a solution to the impasse. In any case, what the Pellegrino/Thomasma project attempts to do is precisely what I say is not possible. We cannot come to conclusions about correct moral dispositions in practices by reference to practices alone.

The authors explicitly try to sidestep questions of what makes a person good as a person, and instead work only from the ends of

medicine. In fact, however, they cannot avoid linking those ends to the ends of a person *qua* person on his own interpretation:

A right and good healing action is the aim of both the doctor and the patient. The right or correct action is what is scientifically and technically appropriate. But the action also must be morally good, that is, it should be in the interests of the patient. 'Interests' include not only the medical good, that which medical knowledge dictates, but also the good as interpreted by the patient in terms of his own values, lifestyle, aspirations, religious beliefs, and so on. (1993, p. 86)

The "interests of the patient" here obviously include references to particular and exclusive understandings of life. How then can the authors claim to establish *the ends of medicine* independently of a conception of the good life? Although the apparent inconsistency is not addressed, the implication is that "a right and good healing action" can be universally applied to the interests of any patient.

Pellegrino and Thomasma imply also that the *virtues* they infer from the ends of medicine are applicable to any particular understanding of the good for the person. Beneficence, for example, is the first virtue and primary obligation that they say is required of the physician seeking the ends of medicine. While those arguing for autonomy as a good in medicine have usually set autonomy in conflict with beneficence, the authors insist that beneficence is not paternalism, but seeks the good of the patient.

That good [the good of the patient] is a compound idea consisting of an ascending hierarchy: (1) what is medically good, that is, restoration of physiological functioning and emotional balance; (2) what is defined as good by the patient in terms of his perception of his own good; (3) what is good for humans as humans and members of the human community; and (4) what is good for humans as spiritual beings. (1993, p. 58)

So here again the ends of persons-in-community are imported into judgment. Pellegrino and Thomasma go on to place the good of autonomy in this ranking at (3): what is good for humans as humans. They conclude that beneficence is foundational to autonomy. (1993, pp. 57-58)

But the problem here is that although autonomy does depend on beneficent oversight for its development, such oversight must necessarily limit both the range of autonomy and also the possible conceptions of the good for the autonomous individual. (See Mendus 1986; 1989) The range of acceptable autonomy is a function of what we think is good for humans. This will lead to potential conflicts in our understandings of what beneficence entails. Prudence, the virtue necessary for the resolution of conflicts arising from the autonomy of the patient, say Pellegrino and Thomasma, looks to an intuitive understanding of the good. For example, the authors consider the proper use of the therapeutic privilege—the prerogative of the caregiver to set aside the rule of informed consent in emergencies and cases of mental incompetence or psychological instability/depression, or where disclosure to the patient of his condition could lead to harm. In this decision the authors elicit the need for “moral insight, for that combination of intuitive grasp by natural inclination of what is right and good here, and how in this decision we call prudence to resolve these conflicts in ways no formula can guarantee.” (1993, pp. 88-89) In sum, they fail to see that the virtues required for achieving the ends

of medicine are tied to ends beyond medicine. Indeed, it is our conception of the good life taken as a whole that defines the virtues.

Virtues shaped by the conception of the good life

My central example of a virtue is courage. Contrary to some Aristotelian models, courage is not found as a middle course between fear and rashness. To view the virtues as a means between extremes is to give primary attention to what should be secondary in the discussion. We do not become courageous by setting out to overcome fear and rashness. For we cannot distinguish between proper caution and cowardice, on the one hand, and laudable boldness and improper rashness, on the other, without reference to the goods we seek and their place in a larger scheme.

To define the virtue first as a mean is to use other criteria implicitly to decide where the mean lies between extremes. The conceptual connection between a golden mean and the good or the moral is not evident, as critics of Aristotle's account have noted.

Although Aquinas, by contrast, says that fortitude is about curbing fear and moderating daring (*ST 2-2.123.3*), it is not the focus of his account. In Aquinas's account it is not the subjective experience of agents' actual fears and areas of confidence that guides them in identifying virtuous acts, but what right reason dictates with respect to ends. As we saw in analyzing MacIntyre's argument concerning practices in chapter 3, goods shape the virtues. Only consequently, and as a matter of overcoming obstacles to goods, do we define deviations from courage in fear or rashness.

Practical reason works from an understanding of what human flourishing and corruption entail, but it also *specifies* where normal aversions lie. We *should* naturally fear some things, Aquinas believes, just as we should have confidence with respect to others. The potential gains and losses are largely known, at least in theory, because the end is largely defined. Virtues are qualities that cannot be precisely

identified and evaluated apart from a particular understanding of the ends that they enable. An acquired human quality is a virtue because of its relationship to goods and especially to the good life. It is each community's conception of the good that determines what counts as a virtue for that community.

This raises an obvious problem. If the virtues are a function of specific and exclusive versions of the good life, then it seems to follow that the "virtues" of one version of the good life might be very different indeed from the virtues of its rivals. A courageous person on one account cannot in any unqualified way be considered a courageous person on a rival account. This is indeed the case. We can more easily see why through specific examples.

If we go behind a particular act to find not only the immediate purpose for rescuing a person from a mob, for example, but the reasons such an act is counted valuable, we discover a final end or ends orienting this life. It is not in a loose or arbitrary aggregation of goods that the virtues can be clearly defined. It is a *particular* end, *contrary* to others, that determines what counts as a virtue. In Aquinas, the moral virtues are interconnected both by prudence and charity and have to do with the agent's relationship to God in Christ. A coherent argument for a coherent set of virtues has to focus on these two virtues first—what do I love, above all, comprehensively, and how do I attain or actualize the object of my affection? Practical wisdom knits a web of dispositions and cultivated responses at the center of which is, in Aquinas, a Christian understanding of the person's purpose in living. Genuine charity toward God and one's fellows orients one's actions and beliefs to produce all the moral virtues. Aquinas follows Augustine here in the claim that charity encompasses the cardinal virtues, which in turn regroup the other virtues.

In the pre-Christian and non-Christian West, to consider other examples, courage has often entailed conditions of physicality, social nobility and magnanimity, as well as public and civic honor that do

not resonate with Christian concepts of virtue. The citizen soldier facing death in defense of the *polis* best exemplifies courage for Aristotle. He did not believe that a woman could model courage for men, nor that slaves were capable of the cardinal virtues at all. Virgil's Aeneas is a man of courage, but as John Casey has underlined, that courage is unintelligible apart from the ends to which he was committed, his loyalties to his father, his wife, his gods, and his city (Casey 1990, pp. 51-103 and especially p. 63). *Especially* his city. The religion of Rome was Rome; the end of Rome was Rome. This clash of ends pitted Roman virtue against Christian virtue and produced an ideal of Christian courage, the martyr.

Islam has traditionally viewed culture as monistic, and subsequently identifies persons and institutions and countries with either the house of Islam (the *dar al-Islam*), or the house of war (*dar al-harb*). As a virtue, courage advances Islam on earth and improves one's lot in a particular understanding of paradise. Martyrdom is the surest route to both. While paradise is unsure for even the most devout Muslim living an ordinary life, and depends upon the balance of one's good and evil deeds, the man dying in a legitimate *jihad* has the assurance of eternal bliss. The martyr is an exemplar of courage here, on a very different understanding than that of Christian martyrdom.

In the comparison of any two comprehensive accounts of the virtues, therefore, we have a problem of commensurability. To define a virtue in terms of an end is to call into question virtues defined with respect to another end. *Genuine courage in one account will always be, to varying degrees, a semblance of courage for a rival version.*

This conclusion is frequently explicit, even in the rival understandings already cited. The Confucian philosopher Mencius actually illustrates genuine courage by condemning several widespread notions of courage based on rival versions of self-respect. One such view held a military ideal of courage and considered resistance to real or perceived insults as more important than life itself. Another associated self-

respect with praise and positions accorded by the ruling powers, and saw courage as the valiant pursuit of these honors. In still another view, traditional moralists preserved the status quo in social conventions at all costs. These three were prone to endanger themselves to achieve their vision of unsophisticated views of human flourishing. Two other, more philosophical, positions nonetheless also proposed mistaken notions of courage, for Mencius. Some forms of Mohism based self-respect on the human excellence resulting from the rational deliberation that produced rules. Courage was that virtue that protected such deliberation and helped people follow the rules so produced. In the position of some strands of Taoism, it was argued that people should strive only to protect themselves, a “refined cowardliness” by rival lights. Almost nothing was so valuable as to merit risk of death or even serious danger, and courage entailed *resistance* to the demands for sacrifice by religious, social or ethical leaders, unless such resistance might itself endanger the individual. (Yearley 1990, p. 148)²³

The virtues of one conception are simulacra to other conceptions. But because of the non-empirical criteria of virtues, rival versions of the virtues can appropriate *acts and stories of courage* from other versions. We can often see how such acts could serve other ends, or we unconsciously interpret them as so doing. As persons influenced by a particular tradition, we have conflicted intuitions in commending the apparently courageous acts of adherents of a rival tradition. We correctly see that the actions resemble in many ways the noble actions we can commend on our own understanding of the world. On the other hand, their ends may repulse us.

Semblances of courage can teach us something about courage. We can admire acts or tales of courage in rival traditions, past and contemporary. (See G. Murphy 2000.) But to do so will always

²³ Despite an evident desire to find points of similarity, Lee Yearley’s (1990) careful comparison of virtues in Aquinas and Mencius finally resorts to the component parts of virtues in order to find points of genuine commonality between the two versions.

require the imagination to interpret these acts and stories in light of our own reasons and understanding of the ends of life.²⁴ In this respect, it is often to our advantage *not* to know the precise motivations and intentions behind apparently virtuous dispositions and acts.

If the virtues are *partly* defined with respect to practices (chapter 2), but if there is not a single practice of medicine, but rather contrary practices (pl.) of medicine (chapter 4), and if the virtues are not freestanding dispositions, but instead are *comprehensively* defined with respect to contrary conceptions of the good, then how do the virtues defined with respect to practices relate to the virtues defined with respect to the good life? Do they stand in tension? They do not, on a coherent account. If the goods of practices relate to the good life as I argued that they do in the last chapter, then the virtues of the good life turn out to be the virtues of practices.

The virtues of the good life as the virtues of practices

The virtues of the good life, broadly speaking, will also be the virtues of health and medicine. Why? How is it that virtues defined with reference to a variety of goods internal to practices can be reconciled and not lead to conflict and chaos in moral reasoning? The virtues necessarily, rather than fortuitously, enable both practices and a larger understanding of the good because they stand in the same sort of relationship of dependence to the good life as do the goods of practices. The practical rationality that orders goods relative to *the* good also orders the qualities and dispositions necessary to attain those goods thus ordered. Genuine virtues on any one account serve both practices and the good life because both the goods of practices and genuine virtues are defined with relationship to that life. So the

²⁴ This is also how I understand the popularity of, for example, William Bennett's eclectic anthologies on the virtues among people adhering to mutually exclusive conceptions of the good. (Bennett 1993; Bennett 1995)

overarching virtues of the good life just are the overarching virtues of practices.²⁵

All goods are not equal in their contribution to the good life. As we saw in the last chapter, the more the goods of a practice contribute to the good life, the more highly esteemed those goods will be. The more of the good life that a practice encompasses, the more full-orbed the virtues associated with that practice will be. So closely linked is the practice of medicine to the human good that the virtues cultivated by Confucians simply *are* the means to personal health, says Peimin Ni. “Confucian moral virtues can be understood as qualities that define a healthy person.” (Ni 1999, p. 27) The Confucian virtue of *ren*, for example, is the most central of the virtues, variously translated as humaneness, compassion, or love. Confucius linked *ren* and personal health in the *Analects* by asserting, “[T]hose who have *ren* have longevity.” (6:21, cited in Ni 1999, p. 31) In the Confucian understanding, vices such as lust, strife, and avarice are not simply moral failings, in the narrow sense in which morality has come to be used in the modern West. When indulged, the vices destroy the person from the inside out. What begins as a deviation from mores will inevitably lead to physical ailments and premature death. Positively stated, by learning to desire the best and eliminating unnecessary desires, the person preserves rather than vitiates her energy and vitality, and consequently experiences longevity and good health in corporeal terms. (Ni 1999, p. 31) So Wang Yang Ming can conclude, “[R]oughly speaking, care for moral virtue and care for the person are

²⁵ MacIntyre’s description of a virtue relative to practices says that a virtue is a quality that “tends” to enable us to achieve internal goods. Why only “tends”? Were the virtues defined with reference only to the internal goods of practices, they should *necessarily* produce the goods of those practices, barring countervailing contingencies. MacIntyre says this is because of the contingent nature of a world imperfectly attuned to the virtues. (191, 198) Other persons may not exhibit such qualities, for example, thus compromising the achievement of these goods even for those who do exhibit the virtues. This is no doubt the case, but there is another reason why the virtues only *tend* to promote practices. It is not based first of all in the contingency of the person’s historical circumstances, but in the reason I give, that the ultimate end determinatively shapes the virtues.

one and the same thing” (*Wang Wen Cheng Gong Quan Shu*, vol. 5) (Ni 1999, pp. 32f) *Zhong yong*, balance or temperance or equilibrium, is a related virtue. The *Doctrine of the Mean*, one of the four major Confucian classics, states: “When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, Heaven and Earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.” (Chapter 1, cited in Ni 1999, pp. 33f) The respect for rites and ceremony, *li*, gives the person very specific guidelines for the behavioral manifestation of well-being. (Ni 1999, p. 36) And so it is with all the Confucian virtues.

The Confucian view of healthcare is therefore fundamentally different from the scientific and social atomism of much modern Western science. The human is social and this sociality is irreducible.

Reciprocity in relations is therefore not simply a cultural imperative but is a law of science. To interact with others properly is to create a salubrious “*qi* field” for oneself. Ni relates the case in which a grand *qigong* master was asked how to relieve nervousness and fearfulness. In reply he exhorted the person to greater filial piety toward his parents, and he argued convincingly for the effectiveness of this remedy. (Ni 1999, p. 39)

It is not just that good morals lead to good health. We might be tempted to draw simplistic analogies with the conditions stipulated by the Hippocratic oath and the exhortations of *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Ni emphasizes that it is not just that the virtues create the necessary conditions for health. Confucian virtues are “intrinsic” to health care: “They are health care itself, like eating nutritious food, or doing physical exercises. In this sense, the practice of Confucian virtues is the practice of health care, and the possession of these virtues is the possession of health.” (Ni 1999, p. 40)

Just as the virtues of health are the virtues of a good human being, so too are the virtues of the practice of Confucian medicine. Human experimentation is permissible only within the bounds of *yi*^a (righteousness) and according to *ren* (humanity) (Chen 1999, pp.

211ff.); legitimate “human drugs” (blood, urine) are those that respect Confucian understandings of *ren*, *yi*^a, and filial piety (Ni 1999, p. 40); and the justice of suicide and assisted euthanasia are decided within the Confucian understanding of *qi* as the beginning and termination of life. (Khushf 1999, pp. 103ff.) This alignment of the virtues and goods of health and those of the practice of medicine is not accidental. The virtues and goods of health and the virtues and goods of practices are the same because the concerns of medicine and of health are inseparable from the larger questions of the good life in Confucianism.

Whether this account of healthcare is ultimately successful is beside the point. It is the best account so far within the Confucian conception of the good life. It is the most error- and conflict-reducing theory produced to date. So it will be with any reasonably coherent account of the good life. The exact nature of the relationship between the virtues of practices and the virtues of the good life will vary by accounts and may not always be as close as they are in the Confucian conception of medicine. Nevertheless, this is the structure of moral reasoning.

Because the goods internal to practices are ordered according to a comprehensive understanding of the good life, so too are the virtues that make them possible. If upon analysis that contribution is shown wanting, practices and their internal goods are called into question. The internal goods of practices may not turn out to be important goods, relative to *the* good. Because the goods of practices are thus ordered, the understanding of the ends and excellences of practices can contract as well as expand, as we saw in the last chapter. If it were discovered that the contribution of the practice to the larger vision of life was less than previously estimated, the practice would change or die out, as have Western practices associated with cock fighting, tobacco, equestrianism, and firearms. A coherent account of the virtues does not tie virtues most basically to practices or to the internal goods of practices, but to an overarching understanding of the good.

Virtues aligned to an overall conception of the good life will occasionally subordinate even the internal goods of one practice to the more important goods of another practice, to the point that the goods of the first are barely realized, if at all. Good parents may see their tennis game suffer.

In the abstract, powers are morally neutral and ambivalent, but this is not the case in practice. The complex fabric of threads tying a power to one particular end cannot always just be severed and reattached to another. The virtues of one tradition cannot simply be imported into another.

Virtues non-transferable

MacIntyre's own position on these questions in *After Virtue* is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he acknowledges the differences in honesty, for example, across Kantian, Bantu, and modern contexts. (192f.) He also recognizes that *tables* of the virtues are different on different accounts of well-being or flourishing, *and* that this is because those accounts are incompatible.²⁶

On the other hand, *After Virtue* seems to suggest that each of his central virtues—justice, courage, and honesty—has a core content that is interchangeable from tradition to tradition. A virtue is a quality that tends to enable the realization of internal goods proper to a practice.

²⁶ "Some modern moral philosophers who are deeply sympathetic to Aristotle's account of the virtues have seen no problem here. It has been argued that all we need to provide in order to justify an account of the virtues and vices is some very general account of what human flourishing and well-being consists in. The virtues can then be adequately characterized as those qualities necessary to promote such flourishing and well-being, because, whatever our disagreements in detail on *that* subject, we ought to be able to agree rationally on what is a virtue and what is a vice. This view ignores the place in our cultural history of deep conflicts over what human flourishing and well-being do consist in and the way in which rival and incompatible beliefs on that topic beget rival and incompatible tables of the virtues. Aristotle and Nietzsche, Hume and the New Testament are names which represent polar oppositions in these matters. Hence any adequate teleological account must provide us with some clear and defensible account of the *telos*; and any adequate generally Aristotelian account must supply a teleological account which can replace Aristotle's metaphysical biology." (162f)

His description of courage states: “We hold courage to be a virtue because the care and concern for individuals, communities and causes which is so crucial to so much in practices requires the existence of such a virtue.” (192) We could take this to mean that our courage is fundamentally the same across differing conceptions of the care of individuals, communities, and causes. Although the understanding of the virtues will vary from tradition to tradition, the core of these virtues is effectively the same. In his recounting of Aquinas’ theory, additionally, he questions the necessary unity of the virtues.²⁷

Whatever moral re-education might be required to reform a Nazi, such a person would *not*, MacIntyre believes, have to “unlearn or relearn what he knew about avoiding both cowardice and intemperate rashness in the face of harm and danger.” A “good” Nazi already has the virtue of courage, even if he lacks the virtues of humility and charity. (180) MacIntyre specifically rejects P.T. Geach’s position that either it is not courage that an unreformed Nazi possesses, or that the courage he possesses is not a virtue. (Geach 1977, cited in MacIntyre 1984, p. 179)

Is a “courageous Nazi” genuinely courageous on the accounts of non-Nazis? My argument to this point says no. MacIntyre has rephrased the question to ask, in effect, Could a courageous Nazi transfer his understanding of courage to another conception of the good life without significant educational “interference”—without “the negative or distorting effect that new learning can have on previous learning or that previous learning can have on new learning”? (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Ed.) His insistence that such a transfer is possible poses an objection to the sorts of conclusions that I have been drawing.

In response, not that much depends here on what we mean by a “good Nazi.” There were many Germans caught up in World War II who

²⁷ The introduction to *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, the succeeding work in the *After Virtue* project, explicitly acknowledges the error of his disagreement with Aquinas on the unity of the virtues. (1988, p. x)

served as soldiers, for example, without any particular allegiance to the Nazi party, good Lutheran farm boys perhaps rationalizing their involvement with an eye to the injustices following the previous war. To call them courageous seems plausible. But such examples miss the reason why thinking about a “courageous Nazi” is interesting. Better to consider the case of a committed neo-pagan, fascist S.S. storm trooper who later sincerely wishes to be re-educated for service as, say, an orthodox Lutheran soldier in a republican political structure. And when we think about the sort of person a “good Nazi” must have been in the historical context of Nazi Germany, questions arise. This was a man who violently defended a form of government defined by the centralization of power under a dictator, strict social and economic controls, suppression of the opposition by terror and censorship, and a policy of militant nationalism and racism. While a Nazi could do many good things with the disposition of character in question, it seems suspect to call it courage without qualification. MacIntyre’s own larger argument gives reasons to doubt whether such a social system is conducive to cultivating genuine virtues at all. The best way to avoid begging the question of whether the soldier’s character is genuinely courageous, or not, is to dissect the reasoning behind the dispositions he formerly cultivated, and then to ask if those dispositions conform to a Lutheran understanding of courage. They do not.

If we apply MacIntyre’s claim more broadly, we see one reason for thinking that there will be interference. If we say that the Nazi is courageous, then it seems that we would have to say that by his lights he is also *just*, *honest*, and a person of *integrity*. We finish by concluding that a Nazi is virtuous. This seems unacceptable. We would then want to qualify our judgment at least by declaring that he is, well, a virtuous *Nazi*. This qualification actually reinforces the difference in disposition that I am underlining. Nazis, misguided politicians, and gifted juvenile delinquents may *eventually* learn to turn their powers to noble ends with above-average results, just as,

corrupted-but-gifted entrepreneurs, public officials, scholars, and clergy can use their qualities to do exceptional harm. But the question is how much re-education is necessary. A great deal, I say, for two reasons. The behavior of a “good” Nazi and a good Lutheran republican is very different, first. Second, even where the behavior is similar, the practical reasoning underlying every decision and every disposition must be rethought and realigned to a very different set of ends comprising the ultimate end of this person’s life. Because of the “courageous” Nazi’s ultimate commitments, his courage turns out to be a simulacrum of courage, at best, on other accounts.

This conclusion is reinforced and explicated by considering a simpler virtue, the disposition toward truthfulness. Human dispositions with regard to truth seem to draw clearer distinctions over what counts as a virtue than those with regard to self-sacrifice. As in the case of courage, it is a society’s conception of the good life that shapes our dispositions of truth-telling. Some understandings of the good life objectively require lying, if not a disposition toward dishonesty.

More importantly, seeing why this is the case will better enable us to identify the critical difference between simulacra and genuine virtues. It is the difference between the natural/necessary features of any act or excellence, and the accidental/contingent uses to which the act or excellence is put.

Truthfulness and the good life

The social good of honor and its ordering are the subject of discussion in this section. I take honor conferred by one’s fellow practitioners to be a good internal to many or all MacIntyrean “practices” as a feature of the life-of-a-practitioner. Since the subject of this argument is not practices as such, however, my conclusions would still have broad application even if that assumption were not warranted.

Working with the standard understanding of toleration and applying it to the evil of lying, I consider the example of slavery in the

antebellum American South. I show how a social institution widely recognized today as unjust—and unjust because built on the falsehood of white superiority—led to a distorted understanding of the virtue of honesty. The purpose of this example is primarily to illustrate the mechanics of the relationship between honesty/truthfulness and the good of honor as it was wrongly ordered in that society. I then broaden the discussion to show how all social contexts face similar problems.

Virtues, or at least something like them, are required to attain goods of practices, defined relative to the good life. By “something like,” I mean again that the virtues of one conception of the good life often do not count as virtues on another conception of the good life. Virtues are not freestanding, but must be understood with respect to the good life, with respect to the goods that are derived from that conception of the good life and that partially constitute that good life, and especially with respect to their ranking within that conception of the good life. The application of a virtue therefore will always depend on the ranking of the goods that it enables. I deny MacIntyre’s assumption that even the most basic virtues can be identified independently of the particular and exclusive ends they enable.

This denial might appear to face an insurmountable difficulty in the virtue of truthfulness. For while truth/Truth/”truth” is the subject of endless controversy in the larger sense, the requirements of truthfulness seem incontestable. Truthfulness is indispensable to the achievement of certain social goods. Shared social goods of any kind, and especially language itself, require a near-perfect level of truth-telling. So much so, as has often been noted, that lying is not even possible without a strong social norm of verbal honesty. How then can truthfulness vary by conception of the good?

Every society has an understanding of what it takes to be the case, from the small and incontestable to the grand and transcendent, and every society knows what it looks like to deviate from that

understanding. That is, every society knows what it is to lie. Lying obscures and blocks the knowledge of what is understood as the truth. As such it is an evil. It causes objective harms. Nevertheless, there are tensions in every society's understanding of what-is-actually-the case on the one hand, and the value accorded to other goods in society on the other hand.

Relationships are an integral part of what MacIntyre intends by the *life-of-a-practitioner*. He claims that the goods of a practice "can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners" in the form of justice, courage, and honesty as they relate to the practice. (191) It might even be argued that those relationships themselves are goods internal to the practice.

Clearly the form and content of justice, courage, and honesty here *define and are defined by* the relationships we have with others such that they cannot be understood apart from those relationships. I confide information to some, but not to others. If I tell the truth to this person but lie to that one about the matter, I cannot claim to have the same type of relationship with both. If I lie to the second person, our "allegiance to each other in the pursuit of common goods has been put in question." (191f)

So social patterns of truth-telling tell their own true tale of the goods of a society. We can know a culture in part by what passes for honesty in it. If we know when, about what, and most importantly *why* it is considered permissible or even commendable to fib to Auntie, then we can also know something about the value of our relationship with Auntie relative to the value of other goods. The value of the truth and the value of other goods can conflict.

The most basic index of standards in truthfulness is membership and exclusion from some group. We are not in the same relationship with people to whom we tell the truth as with those to whom we do not. (See MacIntyre 1984, pp. 191f.) It is also the case that applying

different standards of truth-telling can purposefully reinforce who's "in" and who's "out" of our group. By virtue of that identity and its attendant commitments, people inside and outside the group will not be treated identically. We do not owe quite the same debts of truth-telling to those inside as to those outside and this is due to the relationship of others to the good life and its goods. That is not to say that we are therefore permitted to deceive those outside the group. We *may* be so permitted on certain understandings, under certain circumstances. Deception is integral to success in warfare and if war is permissible, some form of deception or at least misdirection often ensues in the course of successful battle. Our mortal enemies, engaged in pursuing the destruction of our lives and goods, do not have a right to information that they will use against us. More commonly, those outside the group are simply not privy to the intimacy of those inside, whether the group in question is a family, a guild, a religious order, or a business. And on certain understandings of the good life, concrete examples will show, we are permitted and even encouraged to deceive those outside. If a group disdains those outside and perceives itself as having only a narrow need of outsiders, then it may see deceit of outsiders as a positive good having little downside. Some isolated ethnic groups make the pillaging or deception of outsiders a requirement of initiation into manhood (e.g., the Serer of Senegal). This effectively cuts the group off from sharing social goods with those outsiders.

We tolerate lying, *if* we tolerate lying, in view of some good. To tolerate is to refuse to suppress an evil. Since an evil is, by definition, something we seek to avoid, we only tolerate evils if we believe that such toleration will result in the protection of goods. (See Budziszewski 1992, p. 269.) Lying will not be tolerated, let alone encouraged, if it is believed that goods can be protected less harmfully. It is rational to refuse to suppress an evil if and only if it is believed that by tolerating that evil we are thereby protecting some good. On the other hand, a society will tolerate, or even encourage,

lying if it is believed that the harm caused by such lying is required to achieve or to protect greater goods, that is, if it is believed that the security of important goods will compensate for the evils of lying.

An entire social structure will engage in collective deceit *within its own bounds* only if it is believed that open proclamation of the truth will put the structure's understanding of the good at risk. This evaluation of goods protected and harms caused by lying within the society does not occur in the open air of public deliberation. In fact, it cannot do so without betraying lies to the truth from which those lies must be protected. So the processes of mutual deception and self-deception are half-hidden and even half-thought, and therefore not always consistent. These processes will often have the character of rationalization rather than of reason. Our own abilities of reasoning may betray us. To admit to the truth is to see immediately both that the social structure and our interest in it depend on the validity of what the truth contradicts and also that to recognize the truth openly means the collapse of that social structure, including our interest in it. Reason grasps any straw that our own sense of integrity and the standards of our peers will accommodate.

The history of slavery and of other systematic abuses of humanity show that humans are more than capable of rationalizing falsehood, and of refusing to acknowledge truths obvious to others. In the years leading up to the Civil War, the American South was in transition from one form of rationalization to another. In the first, we do not know the ultimate truth but believe something else, and we conform our data to that understanding, unconsciously bending the data to fit the theory. In the second, we know that we are in error, yet willfully collude in bending the truth.

Slavery in the South

Slavery in the antebellum South *required* lying and dishonesty. This institution, and the larger society built upon it, necessitated

untruthfulness for its maintenance. Honor was a good protected by this dishonesty.

The justification of slavery is based on the assumption of superiority. One culture/religion/ethnicity/nation/sex sees itself as better than another in one or several criteria of social ordering. In the Christianized West, there were several arguments for this superiority. Blacks were *mentally* inferior. Blacks were a different and inferior *species* than whites. Slavery was a means of civilizing a savage *culture* and of introducing them to a superior *religion*. Slaves were *materially* better off than their kind in their places of origin. Africans captured and sold as slaves by other Africans were originally prisoners of war or criminals, with in implicit inferiority resulting from that status.

There were other arguments for slavery. And many arguments were based purely on pragmatic terms. The southern economy depended on slaves. But the claim of superiority was the most important in arguments that openly recognized slavery as slavery.

The system reinforced these assessments at several levels. Since formal intellectual education was considered a waste on them, slaves received little or no education. They received no socialization into the dominant culture as such. They therefore *displayed* neither formal education nor socialization, making the circle of rationalization complete. Moreover, slaves learned not to make their plight worse by directly challenging this stratification.

Yet by the late eighteenth century it was increasingly recognized that at a fundamental level, the slaves were the equals of the masters, either individually or collectively. In the southern United States, few proslavery arguments could sustain the claim that Africans were another species or were not made in God's image. Eventually these concessions and others proved fatal to the proslavery position. Many even recognized that these arguments for slavery could not long stand.

Slaves would eventually become civilized or Christianized or in some other way remove the reasons for their enslavement. No doubt the mixed parentage of later generations of slaves also clouded the original distinctions still more. But for some time this equality could be overlooked in view of the other factors just mentioned. At the relevant level, whites were superior.

The southern white male's claim to superiority was increasingly difficult to uphold on any rational grounds. That is, it was difficult to support on the grounds of commonly recognized truth or in reasoning based on that truth. The claim had to be sustained on the basis of socially constructed values, where this superiority was inherent to an understanding of social goods and the good life. To put this conclusion another way, these goods and this life could only be sustained with an understanding of the virtue of truthfulness that was shaped by, and we would say *distorted* by, the values it had to defend. The criteria of truth were subjugated to a way of life and its peculiar institution. A whole society can engage in a collective lie and the antebellum southern United States is a clear example. The South was uniformly Christianized as a culture, though only one-fifth to one-third of the population attended church regularly. (Wyatt-Brown 1982, p. 28) Despite the theological affirmation that all men were created in God's image; despite living under the philosophical affirmation that all men were created equal and endowed with the unalienable right of liberty; despite the experience of shared living over several generations, the dominant culture upheld the lie that *for the common good*, persons of one ethnicity could own persons of another.

How so? What were the manifestations of this subjugation of the truth? What does honesty look like in such a context? The scope of this treatment will only allow the consideration a few examples: legal structures, master-slave communication, and the slaves' communication with outside observers.

Truthfulness is of first importance in questions of law and justice. Social relationships cannot be maintained without truth-telling. The relationship of citizens of the commonwealth to one another must meet a minimal standard of truthfulness in order to maintain a minimal level of civil peace and order. To enforce a minimal level of justice, civil governments require a high level of truthfulness from public witnesses in legal disputes. For this reason, penalties for perjury can be greater than the penalties for the crimes being tried and for which a potential perjurer is a witness.

In the South, slaves were never allowed to give testimony in court cases involving whites, unless their testimony confirmed that of white witnesses. There are of course two ways to interpret this cultural codification. Was it the case that slaves could not be trusted to tell the truth? Or was it the case that slaves could not be allowed to speak the truth? In reality, both conclusions are correct.

In a system constructed so as to deprive them of the most basic human goods in order to procure goods for their masters, slaves had little interest in any virtue that protected that system, including the virtue of truthfulness. Slaves were indeed quite frequently liars, as well as thieves and cheats.²⁸

Lying was not limited to the courtroom. As the runaway Henry Bibb stated it, "The only weapon of self defense I could use successfully, was that of deception. It is useless for a poor slave to resist the white man in a slaveholding State. Public opinion and the law is against him; and resistance in many cases is death to the slave, while the law

²⁸ They often stole food to satisfy the nutritional needs lacking in slave diet. Osofsky notes a parallel instance. During World War II, Japanese Americans had the lowest crime rate of any ethnic group in America. But after they were moved *en masse* to relocation camps, they stole with no compunction, and more so the longer they were interred. (Osofsky 1969, pp. 24-27) It was common for slaves to break tools as a means of protest, for particular grievances or at a matter of response to their unjust circumstances in general. Remarkably, slaves often expressed regrets over dishonesty in their subsequent accounts of these events.

declares, that he shall submit or die.” (Bibb 1849, p. 17, cited in Osofsky 1969, pp. 26f)²⁹

Conversely, slave-holders often refused to give the lie to patently false statements against slaves by the worst of white men. “Patrollers” were white thugs working for bounty. Slave masters hired them to retrieve runaway slaves or otherwise enforce the slave codes. The runaway slave Lewis Clarke mentions that patrollers were capable of ripping up a slave’s written pass and then accusing him of circulating without one. If contradicted, they swore he lied. Yet the masters would not take the slave’s side, because it would not do to have slaves think they could contradict a patroller. (Blassingame 1977, p. 157)

Kenneth Greenberg has analyzed the paradox of a culture both fiercely republican and also slaveholding. Although he may overstate the case, it is true that many of the pro-slavery arguments were actually framed as anti-slavery arguments. The culture of the South engaged in collective self-deception. In the period leading up to the Civil War, the apologists of slavery contended that the Southern slave culture was vastly superior to that of the northern states and Europe. In contrast to the wage-slavery, the *real* slavery, of modern industrial Europe and the North, it was argued, the agricultural South retained a culture that benefited all and reveled in a common understanding of the good life in a traditional honor society. (Greenberg 1985)

Maintaining the fiction of the common good required the participation of the slaves. Slaves had to appear unaffected in their willingness to give honor to all whites. Mere submission through coercion was not adequate. If they only feigned respect, honor suffered. Wyatt-Brown notes that the slave codes had heavy penalties for failure in deference, yet also limited excessive force in achieving compliance, at least

²⁹ Christianity was often a weapon of oppression in the antebellum South. Nevertheless, the exception of the honest slave recorded in slave history and testimony nearly always had some root in an understanding of the spiritual goods of Christianity that transcended the antebellum social order.

officially. (Wyatt-Brown 1982, p. 363) After all, the codes were supposedly enforcing an inherent superiority.

The nature of the slave culture was such that slaves could not openly give an accurate account of their true condition or of their own attitude toward it. In reality, their share of social goods was of course inhumanely inferior to that of the master culture in every respect. Yet to decry this openly, in a system entirely skewed in favor of whites, and maintained ultimately by coercion alone, was to threaten even that small share of goods. Lewis Clarke explains how misguided outsiders mistakenly gave a positive report on the lives of those privileged slaves working as household servants. In fact these were “most to be pitied of all” because they had to please their masters in everything. This entailed constant disingenuousness. “The brighter [in skin color] a slave is, the more he has to lie; for the more the master is jealous of what’s working in his mind, and the harder he has to try to hide it.” (Blassingame 1977, p. 154) As a result, the most frank descriptions and evaluations of slaveholding society by former slaves come to us from testimony given safely beyond the Canadian border.

(Blassingame 1977, p. lx)

The effects of this pervasive dishonesty did not immediately stop after the Emancipation Proclamation, of course. Because former slaves were dependent on whites for pensions and other needs, and because white interviewers were often grandsons of slaveholders, blacks were often guarded in their testimony about their condition as slaves.

Lots of old slaves closes the door before they tell the truth about their days of slavery. When the door is open, they tell how kind their masters was and how rosy it all was. You can't blame them for this, because they had plenty of early discipline, making them cautious about saying anything uncomplimentary about their masters. I, myself, was in a little different position than most slaves and, as a consequence, have no grudges or resentment. However, I can tell you the life of the average slave was not rosy. They were dealt out plenty of cruel suffering. (Rewick (ed.), *The American Slave*, IV, Pt. 2, p. 189, cited in Blassingame 1977, p. xlv)

The following is excerpted from a speech given by Lewis Clarke, a runaway slave, in Brooklyn, New York, and recorded by an auditor there. He begins by downplaying the *physical* mistreatment of slave in order to speak of their moral degradation, and particularly the damage to truth-telling. It is an articulate and powerful summary of my comments thus far.

But what I want to make you understand is, that A SLAVE CAN'T BE A MAN! Slavery makes a brute of man; I don't mean that he *is* a brute, neither. But a horse *can't* speak; and he [the slave] *daren't*. He *daren't* tell what's in him; it wouldn't do. The worse he's treated, the more he must smile; the more he's kicked the lower he must crawl. For you see the master *knows* when he's treated his slave too bad for human nature; and he *suspects* the slave will resent; and he watches him the closer, and so the slave has to be more deceitful. Folks from hereabouts go down to Kentucky, and they send you word that the slaves say they don't *want* their freedom. -Well, I suppose they do. I *daren't* swear I han't done that thing myself. I had the privilege of letting myself out, and sending my master twelve dollars a month.-This was a sort of taste of freedom; for I went round about, and made my own little contracts, and so on.-Now, if some Yankee had come along and said, 'Do you want to be free?' what do you supposed I'd have told him? Now what do you *suppose* I'd tell him? Why, I'd tell him, to be sure, that I didn't want to be free; that I was very well off as I was. If I didn't, its precious few contracts I should be allowed to make, I'm thinking. And if a woman slave had a husband and children, and somebody asked her if she would like her freedom? Would she tell 'em, yes? If she did, she'd be down the river to Louisiana, in no time; and her husband and children never know their minds about freedom; for they know what'll come of it, if they do. I said a slave was like a brute; and so he is, in many things; but he ain't altogether that much like a brute, neither. The fact is, slavery's the father of lies. The slave knows he ought to have his freedom; and his master knows it, jest as well as he does; but they both

say they don't; and they tell me some folks this way believe 'em. The master says the slave don't want his freedom, and the slave says he don't want it; but they both of 'em lie, and know it. There never was anything beat slavery for lying; and of all folks in the world, there's nobody deceived quite so bad, as the masters down South; for the slaves deceive them, and they deceive themselves. Some have thought their slaves were so much attached to them, that nobody could coax them away; and them very slaves now reside in Canada. Others think the slaves are too brutified to think or care anything about freedom; and them's the worst deceived of any. The masters say the slaves are a lying and thieving set; and so they are; for slavery makes a man lie and steal. It won't let him be honest, if he would. (Blassingame 1977, pp. 152f., emphasis in original)

Why did this happen? What was it that made such society-wide mendacity necessary? What were this lying and dishonesty protecting? Having illustrated that lying was required in the slaveholding South, I need to reiterate my intention in using the example. The most important feature for this discussion is not the institution of slaveholding as such, but the system of ascribed honor and honorific goods inherent to slavery. Whites had a good life, at many levels. Many honorific goods inherent to that life depended on slavery. But if we stepped back from the question of slavery, we could see the same dynamic between honor and truth-telling in other dimensions of any society that values honor above the goods of truthfulness. Truth and truthfulness are necessarily sacrificed to the goods of honor. (See Bowman 2002b.)

The virtues just are those dispositions that enable the good life. Truthfulness can be understood with reference merely to a human power, such as the power to convey meaning in complete thoughts, or

to the power to overcome fear and to sacrifice something of self in the pursuit of an end. This is how MacIntyre sometimes seems to describe virtues, as freestanding dispositions. Yet he also has defined virtues in terms of the goods of the good life, and it is this understanding that I have emphasized. It is time now to make explicit and to explain this difference. Tracing the concept to Anselm, I want to begin to show that for any contingent entity, there is a difference between natural goodness and truth, on the one hand, and contingent or accidental goodness and truth according to the uses of the thing, on the other. The difference is, I think, central to morality. In the examples above, the difference is used for evil, to subordinate superior goods (knowledge of what is the case, human dignity) to inferior goods (personal advantage, unmerited honor). Understanding the distinction will, however, eventuate in new insights into how morality is and how it is *not* grounded in nature. Anselm's theory of natural and contingent goodness can explain why the perfection of our natural dispositions *alone* is not an adequate guide to morality.

Anselm and the debt of rightness to truth³⁰

The point of commonality between telling the truth and “doing” the truth in Anselm's *De Veritate* is the rightness demanded of us in signifying, by word or act, both what is and what ought to be. Anselm's insight into the distinction between the two ways in which a sentence can be true has application to acts and dispositions beyond speech-acts.

Anselm notes that there are two senses in which a statement is true. The first is the most common sense, that the statement fulfills a *debitum* toward the thing signified. In this sense truth is just rightness (*rectitudo*) in signifying some aspect of what is the case beyond itself.

³⁰ I am largely dependent here on T.F. Torrance's interpretation of *De Veritate*. (Torrance 1968)

The other sense in which a statement can be true, Anselm says, is if it fulfills its function syntactically, if it says what is intended without self-contradiction. This is not the usual sense of the term, Anselm recognizes, but it too conveys a sense of rightness. It is “true” with respect to its function as a sentence, in that it is not lacking anything with respect to syntax, diction, etc. In this sense, a true sentence (one fulfilling the function of a sentence) could be a lie (one not fulfilling its function of signification).

Of these two senses in which a sentence does what it ought and has rightness, one is “accidental” and contingent (the use to which it is put), one is “natural” and necessary (that it is a meaningful sentence). (In Torrance 1968, p. 309f) This distinction will be developed later by Scotus to show how “nature,” including human nature, is separable from its contingent ends. Using this distinction with reference to non-rational beings can show why their flourishing is not determinate in their relationship to rational beings. Using this distinction with reference to rational beings, coupled with another distinction in the will, can show why the pursuit of human flourishing alone is not determinative of morality. In chapters 7 and 9 I will use this distinction to argue against eudaimonism. For now, I simply want to reaffirm the dependence of the virtues on the ends they serve.

An action, as well as a sentence, can represent the truth, and this relationship has relevance for ethics. Actions are more considered than words. Not to do what one ought is to tell a lie by one’s actions. We can speak, obversely, of *doing* the truth. To do what one ought is to tell the truth through actions. (Recall Václav Havel’s expression “living in the truth” and Jesus’ reference to “the one who does the truth” (ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν). (John 3.21)) Doing the truth follows the same structure as speaking the truth. According to Anselm, the *truth of an action*, so to speak, is also twofold. An action can be said to be true when it is complete. In this sense a painting half-finished is not a true painting.

As in speech, there is also a second sense in which actions are true: if they are true to what is the case. The truth of an action is its rightness. For Anselm, “doing the truth” is equivalent to “doing good.” To do what one ought is to do good and to do rightness. To do the truth is to do good, and to do good is to do rightness. (In Torrance 1968, pp. 314f.)

To illustrate Torrance’s observations on Anselm, consider the realm of art. When an artist represents something in his art—say an idea or a feeling—he communicates something. An author/artist is usually an authority concerning what is represented in his art. Yet we usually do not say that the author/artist is the *ultimate* authority, even of his own art, for two reasons. The artist/author may truthfully but unintentionally represent that which he represents in ways of which he is not aware, or at least not conceptually cognizant. (“Yes, I see what you mean. Those two characters in my play *do* mirror the relationship that the protagonist has with her mother.”) Or, secondly, he may inaccurately represent what is the case. (Consider the technical virtuosity in some propaganda.) Even if his intention is adequately realized, his signification is false.

But in the case of false representation, isn’t he at least the final authority on his *art*, on the artifice he has crafted? Cannot he alone specify *what is signified*? I say no. Strictly speaking, a false signification, *just to the extent that it is false*, does not attest to anything. Anything to which the art/artist accurately attests is something that exists. However partially, it is only to that which is the case that he can accurately attest. The truth or falsity of the art is more evident over the course of a life’s work than in any one piece, of course. And too much attempted deception effectively precludes communication of anything at all, since lying and falsehood are dependent and parasitical on the truth for their deceptive effect. Massive error renders communication impossible. (Davidson 1984, pp. 168ff.) Yet what is the case determines, or “causes”, the shape of

true representation, even if we recognize that artifice always represents it from some perspective.³¹

The actions of an architect, an engineer, an athlete, or a business executive all have the same bipartite structure. By extension, a person's life, or the life of an entire communal tradition, can represent and misrepresent what is actually the case, as in the case of the antebellum South, noted earlier. In each case there is an object (a "what") and an end (a "why"). *Actions and dispositions are right not primarily by being naturally complete or actualized on their own terms, but by being realized for the right reason, in view of the proper end.* "If there were only natural truth in which a thing is what it already is by sheer necessity," Torrance comments, "then there would be no freedom or room for moral obligation." But truth is accidental and things can be in the right with truth only if they do what they ought. In the actions of rational beings, this difference will create room for morality. (1968, p. 314)

The relationship of an assertion to what it signifies is the same as the relationship of an efficient cause to its effect. "[T]he truth of signification follows as the effect of a rightness in the thing signified—this is what Anselm calls the truth of the essence or existence of things." (Torrance 1968, p. 310) Truth in signification is dependent, note, on the truth or rightness of that to which it refers. ("[J]ust as the truth of signification fulfils a *debitum* exacted from it by a rightness in the thing signified and can thus be spoken of as its 'effect' (190. 8ff in Torrance 1968, p. 310), so the truth or rightness of being in the things signified arises out of the fact that they are what they ought to be in relation to the Supreme Truth and is thus to be regarded as the 'effect' caused by the Supreme Truth in the nature of created things." (177.18; 190, 6ff. in Torrance 1968, p. 311) The ultimate truth (God) is the "cause" (in the sense alluded to in final

³¹ The realism I am asserting here is not stylistic realism, over against other stylistic approaches, but at least a weak philosophical realism that can ascribe error to representational artifice.

causation, not as efficient causation) therefore of the “effect” of created things.) Just as a true sentence must give a right account of what is the case, Anselm says, what is the case in turn has a similar relationship, a similar debt, to what a thing ought to be. Things are true only if they participate in truth, a truth conceptually independent of these things. The universal obligation for things to be true derives from this ultimate sense of truth.

The same structure holds for dispositions and acts. An act could be said to be courageous in the natural sense if it entails consciously risking something of oneself in the pursuit of some good, as in the case of our courageous Nazi. All the elements of the virtue of courage are present and correctly configured. All, that is, except the good(s) pursued. The Nazi’s will is not rightly aligned to the right ranking of goods. The debt to the truth is fulfilled in *rightness*: of a sentence to what it signifies, of an act to what *it* signifies, of thought to what is the case, and *of the rightness of the will to what ought to be the case*.

Morality is of the will, and actions of the will also follow this bipartite structure. A will that is true in the natural or necessary sense is a will that acts as any functioning will acts, whether good or evil. But a true will is also, secondly and accidentally/contingently, a will that wills as it ought, that wills *what* is right, and *why*, for the sake of a rightness that transcends the will. This is all clearly headed toward the grounding of everything in God as transcendent source and ground of truth. And clearly the rectitude of a *human’s* intention in an action for Anselm depends on *divine* intention.

Could God without contradiction will against the perfection of a being by thwarting its natural dispositions? Surely the mendacity inherent in slavery and other abuses of the antebellum honor society show that the two must go together, do they not? Isn’t deception wrong *by nature*? I say that it is nearly always wrong, but only contingently, and because of the contingent ends served by truthfulness. Consider briefly a counter-example foreshadowing my argument. A fly fisher crafts an

artificial fly and deceives a trout with it. The fisher is exploiting the natural dispositions of the trout for his own purposes. He is at least partly frustrating the natural good of the trout, whether he releases the fish safely or consumes it. Whether we judge this action wrong or not will depend on our judgment about what the ends of life are.³²

Before setting out this case more fully in the following chapters, I have unfinished business. I have to consider the consequences of MacIntyre's refusal to establish the parameters of a *telos* in the second and third stages of his explication, the narrative unity of a life and a communal tradition. And before I do *that* I want to summarize my answer to the questions first asked in chapter 2. *Are genuine virtues necessary to sustain practices? Can the goods internal to practices be achieved without genuine virtues?* The answers are complex. They can be broken down as follows.

Can a practice produce goods internal to practices—the products of practices and the life-of-a-practitioner—without genuine virtues, without being a good person? Can the Confucian practice of medicine, for example, produce goods internal to practices that can be counted as goods by a Muslim society? Yes, in many instances. Genuine virtues are not required to produce many goods of practices that can be *empirically* counted as goods by the host society. Thus, even in the modern context of coexisting, rival conceptions of the good, many goods internal to practices can be shared.

Does one practice of medicine produce goods internal to practices *for the right reasons* according to a rival practice of medicine? No. The reasons why these goods are counted as goods to Muslims, for example, will be different from the reasons why they are counted as goods in a liberal society.

³² It was because of the inherent deception involved that some early Christians apparently made a moral distinction between fishing with baited hooks and fishing with nets.

Even to the extent that liberal doctors produce goods internal to practices, they do not do so *for the right reasons*, for the purpose of contributing to the achievement of the good life on the Muslim conception. Moreover, there will inevitably be conflicting rankings of goods on rival practices of medicine. Are good liberal doctors good Muslim doctors? No, not without qualifiers.

Genuine Muslim (or whatever) virtues are necessary to sustain the Muslim practice of medicine. They are necessary to produce the goods internal to that practice *for the reasons* that they are considered goods.

MacIntyre distinguishes internal from external goods in that they can be shared by the whole community of a practice, and benefit all who participate. His account of practices does not distinguish these relationships from contractual arrangements of mutual benefit. Internal goods are open to any person prepared to conform to the practice's demands. Cooperation, defined just with respect to the goods of practices, is conditional and contractual. This is, in part, why practices, narrowly considered, can be sustained by simulacra of virtues according to a given tradition.³³

Social cooperation requiring a shared conception of the good, however, will require virtues defined with respect to that conception. On a teleologically integrated view of practices, it is not just that internal goods require relationships with minimal standards of justice, honesty, courage, and other virtues. Particular sets of relationships *are* goods that transcend the goods internal to practices. A sense of significance, belonging, friendship, order, propriety, community, and honor are wrapped up in relationships to such an extent that those particular relationships are ends in themselves rather than just the context for realizing internal goods distinct from those relationships. Goods are objective, in at least the Augustinian sense that evil can

³³ This then points to the prospects for cooperation and conflict in the modern, plural context. These prospects, I think, amount to a *modus vivendi* approach to our common life together. So be it. Things could be a lot worse.

only coherently be understood as a diminution of good. But this tells us nothing about their *ranking* as goods. That ranking is a function of the shared sense of how they contribute to a larger shared conception of what life *is* beyond a particular practice.

It is for the purpose of explaining this conception beyond practices that MacIntyre introduces the second and third stages of his account. I do not think that this explanation succeeds.

TELOS AND TRANSCENDENCE

After Virtue is a response to the failure of the Enlightenment project as a coherent structure of moral reasoning. MacIntyre has proposed a return to the Aristotelian three-part structure—human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be, the development of the virtues as the means to human-nature-as-it-is-if-it-realizes-its-potential. Forgoing Aristotelian metaphysical biology, he induces a neo-Aristotelian teleology in three stages, beginning with practices. In the preceding chapters I have showed how the goods of practices and the virtues are tied to a broader understanding of the human good. Viewed negatively, my argument to this point has excluded the possibility of stopping short of a comprehensive conception of the good life. Positively, I have shown how the virtues are shaped by that conception. In this chapter, I continue the direction of this argument by considering MacIntyre's case for the necessity of the virtues of integrity and constancy for the narrative unity of a life. After surveying the second and third stages of MacIntyre's argument for the virtues, I argue that this argument does not supply an adequate understanding of the human *telos* transcending practices in explaining the narrative unity of a life and the maintenance of a tradition. Since MacIntyre contends that the good life is never adequately characterized, the human end to which these virtues are subordinate is therefore inadequate as a *telos*. Similarly, his argument concerning a communal tradition inadequately answers the ultimate questions required to unite and sustain such a tradition. I argue that such unity would require much more clarity in our understanding of the human *telos* than MacIntyre supplies. Without such an understanding, integrity is not possible.

More importantly, I argue that the three-part schematic of Aristotelian virtue ethics presupposes a frame of reference transcending and giving context to the end(s) of human life. In all the historical accounts

MacIntyre describes as using this scheme, that frame of reference is in turn explained in terms of a larger teleological frame of reference, and so on, terminating in a transcendent and self-referential frame of reference. Without such a transcendent frame of reference, Nietzscheanism is not just the other choice to neo-Aristotelianism before us, but wins the confrontation by forfeit. For Nietzsche's "virtues," too, derive from his conception of the ends of life, which is in turn derived from his premises about such a transcendent frame of reference. Without God, human ends are the construct of a superior human will.

The narrative unity of a life and a communal tradition

In chapter 4 I showed that the ends of practices are given from outside practices. This is important because MacIntyre's argument and insights about practices might lead us to believe that they are somehow self-contained, self-defined, or self-directed. I showed that practices always take their ends and meaning from a larger understanding of life as a whole. Indeed the goods internal to practices *are* high-ranking goods because of the ways in which they contribute to the good life. Particularly the good of the "life-of-a-practitioner" can only be adequately understood as a role within a larger view of society and of life as a whole.

Whereas most versions of Aristotelian ethics begin with an understanding of the good life, and deduce other goods from that understanding, MacIntyre has made practices the most basic stage of his teleology. The later stages build on the earlier, such that "each later stage presupposes the earlier, but not *vice versa*." (187) This sets the three stages in an unusual relationship to each other. Most teleological understandings of human flourishing would order the goods of something like practices at a lower rank than the goods of a tradition, which would in turn be lower than the narrative unity pointing to the good life individually and collectively. And the first two stages, practices and the narrative unity of lives, would be

deduced from a communal tradition, which in turn would have the same relationship to *the good*.³⁴ Aristotle's premises concerning the good of the contemplative life and its relationship to the life of the *polis* decisively shape his view of lesser goods and lesser lives. My argument to this point has followed this pattern. I have shown how the goods of practices and the lives of practitioners are shaped by various conceptions of the good.³⁵

It is possible that MacIntyre's structure of the three stages reflects the inductive apprenticeship of the young subject into the life of the virtues, rather than the structure of developed theory. This fits well with many of his examples and with some interpretations of the arrangement of argumentation in Aristotle and Aquinas. But the success of such an approach for both Aristotle and Aquinas depends on their belief in logically-deducible final causes. These final causes are logically deducible because they are *necessary*, in keeping with the presuppositions of metaphysical biology. We can deduce the actualization of human nature, just as we can deduce the actualization of other natures, because that nature could not be otherwise in a fully rational *kosmos*. So the inductive path taken by the apprentice, and the deductive path taken by the wise necessarily converge. Conventional Aristotelian structures place ultimate importance on ultimate or transcendent premises. MacIntyre's ordering of the three stages in the neo-Aristotelian structure of *After Virtue* avoids such metaphysical questions. But it does so at the cost of a completed teleology. I wish to foreclose the possibility of recourse to anything narrower in scope than a particular and exclusive comprehensive conception of the good for an adequate account of morality.

³⁴ MacIntyre says that he does not take this approach because he wants to leave the good open to modification upon further discovery. I say, and I think that he later confirms (1990), that we have to work from our best account at any given point, though of course it is open to modification.

³⁵ In a more developed argument I would argue for a radically "flatter" default hierarchy under God than that of the Aristotelian chain-of-being (see Kuyper 1932, pp. 164ff; Skillen 1991, pp. 229ff.), but the basic relationship of rank is the same.

As MacIntyre moves from practices to the second and third stages, he notes that the virtue of integrity operates within a larger frame of reference. It requires objectifying one's own life and applying to it criteria that transcend practices. MacIntyre's purpose in the second stage of his argument is to demonstrate how the narrative unity of a life requires the virtues of integrity and constancy. Both the culture of modernization and philosophical practice tend to make us see life as an unrelated series of episodes. The attempt to do ethics only by considering isolated acts is futile. We must know beliefs and intentions if we are to say what a person is doing in a particular setting. No separation is possible between the meaning of overt acts or behavior, on one hand, and intentions, motivations, beliefs, and so forth, on the other. Narrative is essential for characterizing human action, because actions are only intelligible in light of a larger story. MacIntyre's central thesis in this stage of his argument is that "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal." The narrative character of life is determinative for ethics, since we can only answer the question "What am I to do?" if we know: "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?" "Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things." (216) The unity of a single life consists in the narrative of that life.

Contrary to modern or postmodern fictions of the self, the stories of lives in actual social settings are not primarily of our own making. We are not the sole authors, but have been drafted into roles. A person may be the hero of the play, but is constrained to play within the parameters set by other characters and circumstances, and will be held accountable by them for his role.

Anticipating my conclusion, it is at this point in his argument that MacIntyre's naturalistic sociology begins to falter as a teleological basis for morality. My reasons for this conclusion stem from a simple observation about the three-part scheme MacIntyre rightly holds as necessary for successful ethics: "man-as-he-happens-to-be," "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature," and the rules of

morality as the link between the two. The scheme includes the three parts and the frame of reference in which we consider the three parts. A good bolt is one that fastens the oil pan securely to the engine. A good engine is one that smoothly drives a car. A good car is one...and so forth. At each step the *telos* of an object is given to the part by the whole, which takes *its* end from a yet more comprehensive whole. The project before us is one of deriving morality from an ever-widening understanding of what a good man is. But MacIntyre will not take a position that such an end actually exists. Before arriving there, I must note briefly the third stage of his account.

Because none of us pursues the good in isolation, MacIntyre says, a third stage in his account of the virtues is required. In addition to practices and the narrative unity of a life, the virtues are required for the *maintenance of a tradition*. The good life varies by circumstances, and even within a common understanding of the good life our roles differ by familial ties, social station, history, experience, and attributes. It is from these that we take our social identity. Moreover, there is a given-ness to this identity. Contrary to the liberal individualistic understanding of the person, who we are is not an open question. Even though we grow and change and move beyond our point of origin, our past goes with us, partially defining the person we are, shaping even the ostensibly free decisions we make. We are not wholly determined by our beginnings, but we are each bearers of a tradition.

This tradition is neither static nor free of conflict. "A living tradition... is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition." (222) It is through a tradition or traditions that goods are sought over time. Traditions provide the context for pursuing the goods internal to practices and for the pursuit of the good of an individual life.

Traditions are strengthened or weakened in large part due to the exercise or the atrophy of the virtues. Among the required virtues are those already mentioned—honesty, justice, courage, as well as the intellectual virtues. Additionally, a *sense of tradition* itself is a necessary virtue, MacIntyre says. This last is partly defined by the ability to appropriate to the present the stock of maxims developed over time within the tradition.

The frame of reference transcending the three-part structure

In developing the teleological nature of his second stage, the unity of a human life, MacIntyre introduces an analogy, the narrative quest. The medieval conception of the quest has two characteristics. First, a quest requires some notion of *the good*: “without some at least partly determinate conception of the final *telos* there could not be any beginning to a quest. Some conception of the good for man is required.” We must have some notion of the end of human existence. At this point MacIntyre shifts focus. He does not say anything more substantive about the final *telos*, nor does anything we know of the good life shape what follows in his argument. Instead he abruptly turns his attention to the *process of conceptualizing* the ultimate end of human life and this conceptualization takes the place of the end itself. What MacIntyre says here is *not* that it is our conception of the good life, but rather *looking* for a conception of the good, that enables us to order other goods. The origin of the conception of the good is in

those questions which led us to attempt to transcend that limited conception of the virtues which is available in and through practices. It is in looking for a conception of *the* good which will enable us to order other goods, for a conception of *the* good which will enable us to extend our understanding of the purpose and content of the virtues, for a conception of *the* good which will enable us to understand the place of integrity and constancy in life, that we initially define the kind of life which is a quest for the good. (219)
(Emphasis in original)

Thus it is not the good, but rather *the search for an adequate conception of the good*, that orders all subordinate goods. And it is this search for the *conception*, not the *realization*, of the good that requires the virtues. This shift of focus from the ultimate good to the process of its conceptualization continues in the second point of his analogy. Another similarity between the unity of a life and the medieval quest, he says, is the indeterminacy of both: “It is clear the medieval conception of a quest is not at all that of a search for something already adequately characterized, as miners search for gold or geologists for oil.” (219)

Now the word on which this analogy hinges is “adequately.” If his claim here were that no one *completes* the task of defining the ultimate end of his or her life, then the point made would be uncontroversial. We rarely know what comes next in life, to say nothing of what the rest of life holds. In any philosophy or religion or ideology there is always more to be learned, not least because as historical circumstances change, so too do the implications of our commitments. But this observation is hardly significant enough to warrant mention. Rather, in a thought closely tied to the first point of analogy, MacIntyre seems to be claiming that the definition of the *telos* becomes the end of human existence. It is what we do not know, and

the striving to know the unknown, that gives purpose to human existence. He then offers this conclusion:

We have then arrived at a provisional conclusion about the good life for man: the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is. (219)

We might take MacIntyre to mean here that the search really is the *telos* of life. The implication could be that the intellectual seeker *knows* that there is not an adequate understanding of the good life to be found. The seeker is committed to seeking, not finding. The good life on this view is the life of studying and cataloguing various understandings of the good life and the virtues they entail, while carefully avoiding any final conclusions. The “provisional” status of the conclusion is left indefinite.

But this interpretation is highly problematic for his argument as a whole. The perceptive and sweeping adage quoted above is applicable to many a phase in life’s journey. It is *not* an acceptable reference to the good life as a whole, I say, partly because it evokes the liberalism he so strongly criticizes. In the emphasis on seeking rather than the end sought, it recalls the liberal priority of procedure over exclusive ends. His argument does not place any such bounds on the good life. It implies, unintentionally perhaps, that the conclusions concerning the good life can be served by any tradition. If there are legitimate aspirations in human existence not tied to a determinate end, they do not fit well with the picture MacIntyre has previously drawn of a rational scheme of morality. To the extent that our conception of human-nature-as-it-can-be-if-it-reaches-its-potential is insufficiently specified, just to that extent his argument recalls that of the failed Enlightenment project. MacIntyre has shown us, and I have reconfirmed, that the virtues are ends in themselves, yet not, as the

Stoics believed, their own reward. Virtues are subordinate to ends, and are so linked that neither the means nor the ends can be adequately defined independently of the other. As he correctly says earlier, “any adequate teleological account must provide us with some clear and defensible account of the *telos*.” (163) To have a degree of specificity about the good life is to have a basis for rules of morality. Lack of resolution about the ultimate end of one’s life is the lack of the third element of the Aristotelian scheme, the element missing in modern philosophy, and the purported object of MacIntyre’s positive argument. Consequently, the argument seems to fall short of his aim to replace the Enlightenment project with a neo-Aristotelian one. Even as a provisional conclusion to a very long argument for a teleological basis for rational morality, this is frustratingly abstruse and noncommittal. Whatever his meaning, the argument falls short of its stated aim.

On its face, the affirmation that “the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man” is nonsensical. The good life cannot literally be the search for the good life. To seek for something implies that one does not have it, or that one does not have it fully. So the analogy of the quest is not properly applied here, it seems to me. A quest is never for what one already has, or has partially, but for what one lacks, or does not yet have fully. The quest is always undertaken on the basis of what is known or believed about the object of the quest, not of what we do not know or doubt about the object. These are among its essential characteristics. To be sure, much of the good life is experienced in the course of pursuing the good life. And the object of the medieval quest was mysterious and distant. While the fullest understanding of the object of a quest is not known, however, there are *some* basic criteria specifying what it means to fail or to succeed. Either the grail is found or it is not.

The analogy is not only misapplied, it is incorrect in one important respect. The quest can stand for the good life just to the extent that the medieval quest itself is understood from a larger view of the good life

within which it figures. The medieval quest was one vocation believed to be incumbent on a person or people with a robust understanding of the good life. Specifically, it was a mission in service of God and king, God and church, God and country, or other similar combinations. It was an understanding uniquely isolated from rival understandings, *not* universalizable. And it is this framework, or even the claim that something like this framework exists, that MacIntyre has failed to posit. In view of its costs and without a point of reference external to the life of the person on the quest, the quest is vainly absurd and quixotically self-destructive. If “the grail” is a canard, or if the *Weltanschauung* in which it is located is false, then Monty Python provides us a better interpretation of the meaning of the quest than does Robert de Boron.

The narrative unity of a human life requires adequate particularity concerning the human *telos*. Without an adequate understanding of the human *telos*, integrity has no grounding as a virtue. To show better why this is the case, we should look at the meaning of integrity.

In popular usage integrity often means just “morality” generally, or “honesty” or “sincerity” or “uprightness.” These are the qualities we generally associate with a “person of integrity.” Somewhat less frequently it can mean “soundness,” referring to an “unimpaired” or “uncorrupted” condition. But as MacIntyre seems to use it, integrity primarily means “wholeness” or “completeness,” an “undivided” condition. (*Oxford English Dictionary*) A person with integrity is honest, sincere, morally upright, and uncorrupted. But he or she also displays these characteristics consistently. There is a continuity of character across social boundaries. There is also continuity of character across time. The Greek root of the word is *integer*. In English this cognate retains some of the original meaning: a whole number, a unit and not a fraction.

Now the unity of a life, its integrity, derives from an orienting purpose that transcends the individual practices and roles and episodes of a

life. This purpose stands *outside* those elements. It is both common to them and yet independent of them. And it is only in its specificity and wholeness, in its *own* integrity, that the *telos* unifies a life. It is precisely the undivided nature of the human *telos* that provides the criteria for ordering and reconciling the variegated goods of life. Again, the virtues—integrity and constancy in the case of the narrative unity of a life—are not freestanding. They are subordinate to a given end. They are tied to a specific understanding of the end of human life and have content only with reference to that given end, an end that is unified, even singular, and therefore identified and known with some adequacy. To have integrity is to be undivided, ultimately, in one's loyalties and commitments, and to be able to order and reconcile life's goods in a coherent scheme toward that end.

To be sure, a distinction must be made here between certainty about *how* one should fulfill the ultimate end of one's life, and adequate clarity concerning *what* that end is. Within the Reformed tradition of Christianity, theologians draw a distinction between the believer's "primary" calling (or "general" calling) and his or her "secondary" (or "particular") calling(s). The first questions of any Reformed catechism concerned the human *raison d'être*:

Master. - What is the chief end of human life?

Scholar. - To know God by whom men were created.

M. What reason have you for saying so?

S. Because he created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which he himself is the beginning, should be devoted to his glory.

M. What is the highest good of man?

S. The very same thing. (Calvin 1541)

In this construct, the human end and greatest good for humankind is known by faith and orders all other goods. Yet the complex manifestation of this primary calling in practice cannot be reduced. In a period of radical social change, the Reformers show how that primary and singular calling can and must be realized in the kind of multiplicity of roles and practices so central to MacIntyre's case, what they came to call the secondary calling(s). This did not leave each one to their own devices, but made each accountable to God.³⁶

The unknown here is how to reach one's end, not in what the nature of that end essentially consists. MacIntyre's brief references to the good life do not provide such a coherent set of concepts enabling an integrated life. To the contrary, his picture of the good life includes a strong form of the tragic protagonist who "cannot do everything that he or she ought to do" because "*ex hypothesi* he or she has no *right* choice to make." (224) To realize one good or duty is to fail to accomplish the other. Moral failure is certain, by definition, regardless of the course of action chosen. Examples of such are taken as evidence against the possibility of a single, coherent vision of *the* good life. His open-ended conception of the good life does not resolve these tragedies. Can they be otherwise incorporated into his account?

A person facing a tragic dilemma perceives herself as being morally required to perform both of two actions that are mutually exclusive. Yet MacIntyre denies as a false dilemma J.L. Austin's choice between "rival and contingently incompatible goods making incompatible claims on us" or "some determinate conception of the good life for

³⁶ Luther constantly argues that *any* occupation or station is as spiritually elevated as a religious vocation. He points, for example, to a crisis in the life of St. Anthony. Wondering about the worth of his desert existence in Egypt and "whose equal he would be in the kingdom of heaven", Anthony's encounter with an Alexandrian cobbler re-orientes the monk's thinking: ". . . so St. Anthony comes to the cobbler and asks him what he is doing. The cobbler replies: I, a poor citizen, ply my handicraft; I daily pray that all might be saved and that I, too, poor and unworthy sinner, may gain eternal life through Christ. Hearing that, St. Anthony blushed; he was ashamed to realize that he had not come as far in his monkery as this cobbler." (*Works* 47, pp. 599f. as cited in Kallas 1982)

man.” These are not the only two alternatives. Instead, the good life entails knowing how to choose between better and worse ways to face such tragic confrontations. Faced with the unavoidable necessity of choosing between goods that are both genuinely good and contingently incompatible, to live an integrated life just means making tragic choices “heroically or unheroically, generously or ungenerously, gracefully or gracelessly, prudently or imprudently.” (224)

Will this suffice as an alternative to the morass of value pluralism on the one hand and the constricting rigidity of a single *telos* on the other? No. This proposal does not resolve the problem I have underlined. In this context I can only mention one objection to it, by way of underlining the need for an overarching and particular conception of the good. Moral dilemmas are constructs.

Dilemmas are interpretations of actual events, or more often, of purely hypothetical situations. Their force depends on their being construed as dilemmas. Hypothetical circumstances are therefore nearly always preferred as examples, over against actual events, because to consider real cases is to risk the introduction of any number of actual factors that could weaken the force of the dilemma. If the initial description of the hypothetical case proves solvable, it can always be modified so as to close every exit.

A callous person, or a person from a different tradition with a clear sense that there is a better choice among the possible options, will not see it as truly tragic choice as do those for whom the story has been constructed. Unless the goods or duties are as balanced for her as they have so carefully been calculated to be for others, she will not yet be facing a dilemma. If such a person perceives one of the mutually exclusive obligations on her as clearly dominant, then she has a basis for making a decision, however costly. Only as controlled constructs can their offsetting obligations be so carefully balanced as to ensure

that it is a *prima facie* dilemma, rather than a potential example of sacrifice and courage.

Every real-life moral problem has consequences that are open to the unforeseeable. In the real world the past is more subject to the agent's control, and the future less subject to the agent's control, than they are in hypothetical moral constructs. We do not enter actual moral combat on a level field of battle, where each moral decision can be weighed in absolute terms. Every person enters every moral encounter with the residual effects of previous moral failures, her own and those of others. Every real-life moral problem has a personal and social history. We should not approach any real-life situation with the expectation that such consequences can be completely avoided. Under the circumstances, we make do. But the situation can be viewed as having possibly been otherwise. And we hope for grace.

To posit the essential and unavoidable tragedy of life "*ex hypothesi*", as MacIntyre does, is to assume the incoherence and irreconcilability of the ends of life. It is to suggest that a unified good life was never a possibility, that there is no life that can rationally incorporate its various constitutive goods particular to, for example, the limited frame of reference of practices. On this view, the good for man finally does not necessitate a unified set of virtues defined with reference to that good. Instead, it is the virtues that hold together the otherwise-incompatible goods that constitute the good life. MacIntyre's introduction of received notions of "better" and "worse" responses to conflict only begs the prior question of the criteria we use for deciding what constitutes better or worse responses. He has not provided any such criteria or scheme of interpretation such as pagan cyclicalism or the biblical Creation, fall, Redemption, and Restoration. MacIntyre had pledged the virtue of integrity as the way to reduce the conflict and arbitrariness of a life viewed only from the perspective of practices. (201f) He has not made good on that pledge and it is for structural reasons in his argument that the debt is outstanding.

What MacIntyre calls the Aristotelian tradition of the virtues always assumed a transcendent frame of reference as context for the three-part scheme of “man-as-he-happens-to-be,” the rules of ethics, leading to “man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature.” A *telos* or purpose always implied a larger frame of reference. Unless that frame of reference extends beyond the particularity of our own historical circumstances, however, it remains subject to challenge by any other cultural construct. The transcendent frame of reference implied in teleological accounts has included variously metaphysics, Yahweh, Allah, God, Fate and the gods, or spirits.

Consider MacIntyre’s description of the virtues in heroic society, for example. An accurate telling, he says, requires an account of the context of social structure and *vice versa*. But it also requires reference to powers beyond human control—the passions, the gods, and fate. The end of life toward which one is moving inexorably is defeat and death. To understand this truth, to recognize it intellectually and to order one’s life in accordance, is a virtue, specifically a type of courage. It is because of the importance of fate that seers and prophets occupy an important role in heroic society. Life is represented in epic and saga because life *is* an epic or saga in its structure and direction. MacIntyre compares the moral situation of men and women in heroic society to a chess game. Just as good and bad moves in chess are matters of objective fact, so too the characters in heroic societies have no trouble knowing what is right. The game itself, heroic society, is rarely a matter of preference. The purpose of life is given and one acts accordingly. The moral structure of heroic society, MacIntyre therefore argues, is one composed of social roles, requiring certain excellences for their fulfillment. Life is seen as fragile and vulnerable, moving inexorably toward one’s destiny and death. In this context, the self is a social creation, not an individual one. (123-129)

The characteristics of the transcendent source of the *telos* varied widely of course and the Greek understanding of fate cannot be understood in the same terms as the Unmoved Mover, which cannot be understood in the same terms as Yahweh. MacIntyre mentions the gods and fate and they figure in his explanation, but his emphasis rests rather more heavily on the social than the socially transcendent, be it divine or metaphysical. Nevertheless, I object, one can scarcely turn a page in Homer without seeing a reference to or an encounter between some divinity and a principle character. Indeed, the gods themselves are social actors and anthropomorphic personages, with a limited range of virtues and a narrative of their own intertwined with the human story at multiple levels. In contrast with the personal and immanent presence of the gods, fate is impersonal, implacable, certain, but largely unknown. Those few times when prophets and seers revealed one's destiny, this revelation functionally served to confirm its inevitability, however permuted might be the details in the actual realization of one's fate.

The virtues therefore reflected this reality. Courage, as noted, means embracing this reality without wavering. Why couldn't courage be the noble fight to *resist* such a fate, however futile, in a display of one's own merit? The reason is not just that such resistance is socially unacceptable, although it is. Such resistance is socially unacceptable primarily because it is contrary to the ultimate order of things. To resist is to deny the unalterable truths of the *kosmos*.

The same is true for every version of ethics in MacIntyre's historical treatment. MacIntyre rejects Aristotelian metaphysical biology. The basis of the Aristotelian metaphysical biology he correctly rejects is, of course, Aristotelian metaphysics. Aristotle's entelechy is closely tied to a chain-of-being cosmology terminating in a transcendent impersonal deity. A different understanding of the transcendent (and one incommensurable with Aristotle) yields a different understanding the good life in Judaism. And so also in Christianity, and Islam.

In each historical instance, the three-part schematic of ethics presupposes a frame of reference transcending and defining the end or ends of human social life. In all the accounts MacIntyre describes as following this scheme, that frame of reference is in turn explained in terms of a larger teleological frame of reference, and so on, to a transcendent frame of reference. Note that the ultimate frame of reference in each instance is self-referential. For Aristotle the final end in a rational universe is thought-thinking-itself. The biblical God has God's own glory as highest end. MacIntyre fails to take a position concerning whether there *is* a substitute for the relationship that those religious or metaphysical elements have to the moral structure of Greek societies. On his account, this final reference is not to any transcendent entity, however, but to a social one. As such, it cannot take the place of Aristotelian eudaimonism. A unified view of the human good implies a purpose transcending human life. To call into question the possibility of a unified good is to call into question the project of justifying the virtues. It is only a definite understanding of the good for man, as MacIntyre has so compellingly argued, that anchors the rules of morality.

Surely, it will be objected, there is another possibility. Rather than looking to indemonstrable notions such as God or the Unmoved Mover or Nature, why not look simply to human nature alone, justifying morality with the tools of science and reason? And now that the sacred canopy has been rent asunder, the objection continues, isn't this the position of vulnerability and freedom in which we find ourselves, after all? Can't we do without transcendent meaning altogether?³⁷

Whether the attempt is made by ethical naturalists, or by theists making their case before ethical naturalists, it is subject to

³⁷ I can't undertake here an analysis of the presuppositions behind this objection, other than to point out that those presuppositions are as indemonstrable and as susceptible to the same sort of sociological deconstruction as those to which the objection objects. (See Berger 1970; Milbank 1990)

MacIntyre's original critique of the Enlightenment. Human nature in its uneducated condition does not point us to any particular position concerning social cooperation. Unless we smuggle into the argument our notions about what human nature *ought to be when it realizes its potential*, then uneducated reason does not point us toward conventional notions of moral behavior. Contrary to the Enlightenment approach, it is our understanding of the good life that adjudicates life's conflicts.

That understanding might be groundless. Maybe there is no actual transcendent point of reference. But the need to take a theological or metaphysical stand cannot be avoided simply by waving at Nietzsche as a threat. Indeed, not to present or allude to such a framework makes the project vulnerable to someone like Nietzsche who is prepared to forego internal goods, integrity, and tradition for a life constructed on its own terms. Conventional notions of human happiness are not a defense against Nietzsche.

The problem with happiness

Terms such as the "human good" or "the good for humans" or "our true good" or "the common good" are ambiguous. They might refer to full human flourishing, the realization of human potential in excellences and goods internal to human "practices," human lives as unified narratives, and social traditions, for example. This is the meaning I attribute to the theories of MacIntyre and of other Thomists, and to eudaimonism generally. But the human good could also refer to a good that does not look first to human nature, even collectively, but that takes a supra-social perspective that asks about the proper relationship of humans to everything else, about their place in the cosmos. It views *the* (comprehensive) good as determinative of what humans should consider good and doesn't presume that human flourishing is the ultimate good. This second perspective is the perspective from which I am arguing. But to avoid confusion, I will

refer to this second perspective as the perspective of “*the good*” rather than as “the human good” or terms of the sort.

Eudaimonia is usually translated as “happiness” or “flourishing.” For Aristotle and much of the ancient world, *eudaimonia* was primarily an objective state conforming to objective criteria. To modern ears, “happiness” is generally a subjective state. The subject is considered the final authority on his or her happiness. This is only *generally* the case because most would question that a perfectly contented drug addict, with all the resources necessary to satisfy her addiction, is truly happy. For this reason, the subjective understanding is inadequate. “Flourishing” carries the required objective status, but can apply to non-human life forms—plants and animals. MacIntyre, as noted in my first chapter, wants to emphasize this continuity in the development of distinctively human goods and excellences. (I will emphasize the discontinuity introduced by a Scotist structure of the human will.) In any case, “flourishing” is probably the best translation in English and is primarily the one I use in this chapter and the next. Many of the scholastics followed Aristotle in emphasizing the perfection of a being’s nature as its end. As I understand it, MacIntyre’s argument joins others as a eudaimonistic justification of moral behavior based in the social goods of human flourishing.

Now my question is the following. Why should we consider the flourishing of our particular nature to be normative? To question what contemporary eudaimonists merely assume to be the case, what makes flourishing normative in the metaethical sense? What makes our good even partly constitutive of *the good*?

For an Aristotelian account to be complete, it must be shown that what is good for our well-being is correctly understood in relation to *the good*, that the demands of our good, subjectively understood from a narrowly human perspective, are the demands of justice. We have seen in my chapters up to this point that Aristotelian practical rationality binds only contingently to the subordinate ends that it

names in the context of a larger conception of the good. It requires a concept of goods as the requirements of justice. I question how these demands on us can be objectively understood, from outside or “above” the perspective of the human race, from beyond the perspective of *Homo sapiens*. My comments are directed primarily to natural lawyers who also have theistic commitments. Nevertheless, the question must be answered by non-theists as well: Why *human* flourishing? Is there a basis for viewing human flourishing as good that is not merely anthropocentric bias?

Parasites and predators

Many natural-law-cum-eudaimonistic theories, including MacIntyre’s, take as a premise that the common good, a good that is objective from the standpoint of any one individual or group, is objectively good from a supra-human, or cosmic, perspective. I think that the premise is correct, but only contingently, not necessarily, correct. In referring to the objectively good from “a supra-human perspective,” I have God in mind principally. But to illustrate the problem generally, consider a context inhabited by entities other than humans, both real and hypothetical, whose flourishing is incompatible with the flourishing of humankind—guinea worms and extra-terrestrials.

The guinea worm is a parasite found in the African and Asian tropics. The mature worm can grow to 120 cm (48 inches) in length living in the host body’s organs. At maturity, it bores close to the skin’s surface forming a blister that bursts and releases millions of larvae. If the host is standing in water, to relieve the discomfort of the blisters for example, the larvae are released into the water, and are eaten by water fleas. Other humans are infected when they drink unfiltered water containing these tiny aquatic crustaceans, and the cycle begins again. When the worm emerges at the surface of the skin, human hosts typically extract it over a period of days by wrapping it around a stick. If the extraction is too rapid and the body of the worm is broken, the host usually dies from infection.

The flourishing of the guinea worm is incompatible with human flourishing. Several international development organizations therefore have the eradication/extinction of the species *Dracunculus medinensis* as a stated goal. Is there a justification of this aim from a position that transcends the human common good? The issue is the same one raised by some environmentalists and some animal rights activists in questioning the goodness of human flourishing. Responses from a range of traditions might invoke some form of human superiority as one element of such a justification. It might be claimed that the excellences of human flourishing are superior to those of the guinea worm, for example.

What happens in a scenario where humans do not have a position of superiority? The invasion of the earth by hostile non-human aliens is a standard of popular science fiction. The narrative point of view is always human, understandably, and the humans inevitably triumph, demonstrating their superiority, in martial matters at least. Consider, however, the possibility of an alien invasion by a species superior to *Homo sapiens* in every way, including martially, and whose flourishing is incompatible with human flourishing due to scarcity of resources. How could a eudaimonistic philosopher facing this scenario and forewarned of our impending doom give a rational explanation of this outcome? Or *is* there an objective justification for human flourishing from a non-human standpoint when humans are *not* intellectually/physically/socially superior?

Hobbes, Hume, Gauthier, Hart and others do not think so. Their ethics are posited on the approximately equal strength and vulnerability of the concerned agents. On these grounds they attempt to argue that moral behavior is in the individual's rational self-interest. MacIntyre has demonstrated, successfully I think, that these accounts of conventional moral behavior, based on an individualistic and supposedly ahistorical understanding of uneducated human nature, do not succeed. He has argued instead from the basis of shared social goals. If the question is raised to the supra-social, however, how does

a “common-good” ethics make a rational objection on *moral* grounds, on grounds of justice, to the loss of human flourishing in this scenario? What makes the human good right? What is the larger good of which the human good is a necessarily constitutive element? The common human good cannot be considered a good in absolute terms without a demonstration of how human flourishing justly relates to *the* good that is not based in mere anthropocentric bias. One such perspective is that of divine sovereignty. But MacIntyre has not posited that basis or any other for believing that our conception of the good is more than an assertion of human will.

Now it might be objected at this point that I am in the grips of a colossal misunderstanding of what MacIntyre is trying to do in *After Virtue*. What I am misunderstanding is that MacIntyre is arguing merely for the necessity of a *formal* conception of the good in an adequate account of practical rationality. He has not presented a particular and substantive conception of the good because he never intended to do so, and because he need not do so to make his case. Does the objection stand?

To the objection that I have misunderstood MacIntyre's argument, and that he did not intend to and need not present a substantive conception of the good, I reply that this is to misunderstand *my* objection. A question must be answered, if only by simple assertion as a first principle. Is there an ultimate good that is not merely a product of convention or will?³⁸ Without committing himself to such premises, it seems to me, MacIntyre concedes the argument to anyone bold enough to question that any such basis exists. By not designating a *telos* transcending human flourishing, he not only leaves the door open for Nietzsche's interpretation, I think that he concedes the argument. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a self-referential final end in the absence of others, the will to power in the absence of a structure of the will directed toward any substantive good.

Nietzsche and transcendence

Nietzsche's treatment of the ethical does not succeed against Aristotle, says MacIntyre, because the arguments of chapters 14 and 15 of *After Virtue* draw on Aristotelian texts as canon and those arguments are successful. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* finds no objective good that holds authority over him in the social world, and looks instead only to himself as authority for the formulation of a new law and new virtues. He has no relationships and no activities of the kind described in MacIntyre's positive account. Such a man uses others, and lies rather than tells the truth. The Nietzschean great man *cannot* enter into communal relationships because to do so would be to recognize a common authority, and he is his own authority and law. His relations with others are an exercise of that self-authority. Yet if MacIntyre's

³⁸ We might even state this in terms of the Aristotelian causal structure with which I began in chapter 1. Is there in reality a *formal*—in the technical sense—conception of the good that is the *final* cause of human action?

account of the virtues is successful, he says, it is the isolation of the Nietzschean man that forces that man to create his own authority. If the conception of the good has to be conceived in terms of the three stages, “then goods, and with them *the only grounds for the authority of laws and virtues*, can only be discovered by” relationships forming communities “whose central bond is a shared vision of and understanding of goods.” (Emphasis mine.) To isolate oneself is to “debar oneself from finding any good outside of oneself.” (258) Only in society and in socially-defined morality, that is, can one experience socially-determined goods. Does this answer Nietzsche? I don’t think that it does, but I must say more about Nietzsche to show why not.

Knowing precisely what Nietzsche advocates is problematic. Rüdiger Safranski has developed a biographical interpretation of Nietzsche, showing that Nietzsche can be better understood if we interpret his work in light of his life. (Linker 2002; my account of Nietzsche here draws heavily on Linker’s critical review of Safranski.) Safranski portrays Nietzsche as a man indefatigably committed to understanding the world as inherently meaningless. He was not searching for hidden truth, but worked from the assumption that he had in fact discovered the truth and was determined to present this truth unflinchingly.

Nietzsche claims to have initially moved away from belief in a God who “has guided me safely in everything as a father would his weak little child” to dawning unbelief because of “too much intense injustice and evil in the world.” From this position of unbelief he moved on to ask “how our view of the world might change if there were no God, immortality, Holy Spirit, or divine inspiration, and if the tenets of millennia were based on delusions.” He soon concluded that we should not suppose harmony between the true on the one hand and the good and beautiful on the other. Rather, the truth can be “detestable and ugly in the extreme.” In 1888, just one year before his mental breakdown, Nietzsche wrote in his notebooks, “For a philosopher to say, ‘the good and the beautiful are one,’ is infamy; if he goes on to add, ‘also the true,’ one ought to thrash him. Truth is

ugly.” This theme thus spans Nietzsche’s career. (Cited in Linker 2002)

Yet Nietzsche strove for a way to affirm life despite its meaninglessness. As early as *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche proposes myth as a way of dealing with life’s meaningless, but myth that also recognized some measure of the ugly truth. He desired to create a “beautiful illusion” by which the crumbling post-Socratic Western world could cope with the pathos of its meaninglessness. He turned to the origins of moral man. The anarchy and violence of the prehistoric world was ended by those victorious individuals who imposed their will on others. “The strong” imposed the original “moral valuation” on the human race in imposing their will. Here the good (“noble”) is just the expression of the will of the victorious and bad is weakness, birds of prey devouring helpless lambs. But there is no “free will” involved and no blame in the act. Will here is merely the imposition of power. In time, these heroes came to be viewed as gods.

But then came a “transvaluation of values” and the invention of free will as a choice, rather than just what the strong do, in the same way that the failure of the weak to triumph was also a choice to refrain from those behaviors. What was once bad (weakness) is now considered the highest good, and good (strength) has become “evil.” From the *ressentiment* of the weak, dominated slave classes was born the concept of God and consequently of original sin requiring grace. For Nietzsche, science is much more radical than Christianity in its negation of life. While Christianity’s obsession with sin belittles man, science places man on the same level as lower species.

The ascetic ideal culminates in Nietzsche’s own thought, wherein science “unmasks” itself as the perfection of the ascetic ideal. This ideal is the arbitrary value we project onto the world in order to find meaning in the face of meaninglessness. The ascetic ideal thus gives

birth to the Christian God and ultimately leads to his “death.” The lie of the ascetic ideal ends in its own unmasking and exposure.

Safranski contends that Nietzsche’s response to the return to chaos is evident in the madman’s speech in *The Joyful Science*:

How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off of us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? *Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?* (Cited in Linker 2002; his emphasis)

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche introduces the *Übermensch* as the solution to our predicament and as our evolutionary next step. The concept of “the eternal recurrence of the same” makes this step possible. This idea is based on his notion that, given a finite quantity of matter existing in an infinite temporal context, every possible permutation of matter and events has already occurred and will endlessly recur. Whether Nietzsche held this belief as solid science or Wagnerian myth, his theory of anti-creation [my term] supplies the basis for man’s self-affirmation and self-divinization. The affirmation of every moment of this world’s existence, through willing its eternal recurrence, is his substitute for the dream of heaven, his means of realizing eternal bliss here and now. And since the past can be seen as prelude to the present, we can affirm the past, see it as necessary, and come to act as if we willed it:

. . . as creator, guesser of riddles, and redeemer of accidents, I taught them to work on the future and to redeem with their creation all that has been. To redeem what is past in man and to recreate all “it was” until the will says, “Thus I willed it! Thus I shall will it”—this I called redemption and this alone I taught them to call redemption. (Cited in Linker 2002)

Thus the *Übermensch* replaces God.

While Nietzsche speaks of the “will to power” of all living things, he opposes the scientific equation of human to non-human life. Other forces in the universe are malleable to the will of the god-like man, the superior-to-the-common-man, able to direct even the weak-willed and the *ressentiment*-filled, herd-minded common lot of men and women. Even if he experiences tragedy, this man alone dares to face the consequences of his will and to assume responsibility for them. But he does so, once again, as the solitary will in the cosmos.

My purpose in introducing these analyses by Safranski and Linker is to underline the consequences—and consequences are ultimately the only criteria we have on MacIntyre’s conclusion—of refusing to address the question of God or on some metaphysical presupposition relative to morality. The purpose of any human activity or good is given from outside the activity and if there is a purpose to the *polis* or to human society, it also must come from outside, if only from the conceptual distance of human will and rationality. In MacIntyre’s construct, morality is transcendent only in the sense that it is a practical necessity for any given society, and only in the barest understanding of truthfulness, courage, and justice. It is a powerful argument as far as it goes. But if a person does not want to stand in society, on this view, then she does not stand in the context of morality. She is literally beyond good and evil.

An outlaw is not morally different than a wolf or a bear wreaking havoc on a village. The brigand is a menace, but not immoral for any

reason unconnected with his position outside that particular society. For the person standing above any particular social setting, the rules no longer apply.³⁹ If we deny Aristotelian metaphysics and refuse to take a position on God or of some other transcendent frame of reference, then what else do we have but human will?

My conclusion to this point is *not* that we therefore need *God* for morality. It should be clear from what I have claimed so far that we have *some* morality, however repugnant, in any rational individual or cohesive group of social, rational beings. Some minimally conventional form of morality is possible without God, though *if and only if goods—and specifically the social goods of a particular, historical tradition—are taken aggregately as ultimate.*⁴⁰

MacIntyre has placed us before a choice of consequences: Aristotelian virtue ethics or Nietzscheanism. On their own terms, however, there is not enough common ground between them for disagreement.

MacIntyre can show Nietzsche's historical errors, but he cannot undermine his basic position. MacIntyre's ordering of goods is not Nietzsche's ordering of goods. If we overlook Nietzsche's mistaken history of heroic aristocracy, he still confronts us with the basic question: Nietzsche's thought is premised on "the death of God." The realization that God never really existed outside the human mind is *the* Nietzschean truth. Nietzsche's virtues, too, derive from his understanding of the human *telos*, which derives in turn from his understanding of transcendent reality, which we might term "not-God." Whereas the moral philosophers of the Enlightenment retain the Christian morality of their predecessors, Nietzsche places the *Übermensch* in the position of God, in the most conscious and thorough way possible.

³⁹ In the same way, society is not bound by rules toward others that are not fully socially actors. Unless the alien, for example, can be shown to have a contributing role to our particular understanding of the good life, she has no protection.

The Nietzschean man looks to himself because he does not believe any other morality is anything more than a social construction. To submit to the herd is to adopt the herd's goods, yes. But nothing prevents such a man from embracing other goods, of his own making. MacIntyre has ignored the question of God, Nietzsche's most basic question. Nietzsche may be finally unsuccessful for other reasons, but none of them can ultimately be divorced from a decision concerning a human *telos* standing outside human society. On Nietzsche's terms, in declining to provide reasons for, or simply the presupposition of, such a point of reference, MacIntyre seems to have conceded the argument.

The analogical reference at the end of *After Virtue* to a "doubtless very different" St. Benedict poses the obvious problem that there could have been no original St. Benedict without the Catholic Church, no Church without a resurrected Christ, and no resurrected Christ without the Triune God of whom Christ is the second person. What form a very different Benedict might take in the modern world will be a function of the supra-human as well as social horizon a particular community sees.

The strictly naturalistic-historicist case for the virtues implied by MacIntyre's passing comments on the good life *cannot* supply an adequate teleology for MacIntyre's three stages themselves because any such closed system precludes any such external reference. The context of a larger frame of reference is missing. I have attempted to show that not only is the link missing as it relates to society as a whole, but also that each stage is more directly dependent on that final link than MacIntyre's argument indicates.

It is *not* part of my negative conclusion that Nietzsche's position is the necessary stopping place for non-theistic ethics, or that Nietzsche

⁴⁰ To be sure, Christian philosophers such as MacIntyre cannot have a substantively *Christian* ethics without God-in-Christ, not even in the most mundane matters.

presents a case for his version of morality that is ultimately coherent.⁴¹ But without identifying a conception of the good that stands outside the social, we are not faced with “Nietzsche or...”, it seems to me. It is not “either...or...” if we have nothing more than what MacIntyre stipulates as presuppositions. Choice presupposes a rational being who chooses, and therefore concedes the confrontation with Nietzsche from the outset. If it is a *choice* between Aquinas and Nietzsche, then it’s Nietzsche. For it is precisely Nietzsche’s point that *we* decide. We choose. By an act of the will, we chart our fate. It can only be *our* will that decides morality. What is “for our good” is irrelevant if we do not will the conception of the good from which is derived our good.

As rational beings endowed with free will, we cannot refute Nietzsche’s position in favor of some other position unless that position presupposes a source of human function. If we are the only rational, volitional beings in the universe, then why must my will accord with the rationality of social goods? Without God in the picture, and without the assumption that social goods are ultimate, what necessitates that I *will* any particular ordering of goods? Nietzsche saw that without God (or a God-substitute) as *the* ultimate reference of good, man alone creates and orders goods. Without God, there is no divine will. Without divine will, human will is alone in the universe, setting aside for a moment the possibility of extra-terrestrial rational beings, predatory or benign. No other will than human will exists. Human will operates freely—individual will vis-à-vis individual will, collective will vis-à-vis collective will, and individual will vis-à-vis collective will.

Without God there are solely human accomplishments, goods, and excellences. It is humankind excelling and creating to the credit of the race. In an individual, this characteristic would be quickly labeled as hubris. In the aggregate, Augustine saw it as the pride and the glory of

⁴¹ His argument is incoherent, partly because it is not an *argument* at all. As MacIntyre points out repeatedly, argumentation is only possible within a tradition.

the city of man. But his critique assumes the existence of the *civitas Dei*. If there is nothing higher than the race as a whole, and given the mediocrity of so many, nothing but the will of others prevents an exercise of the will by one bold enough to realize that s/he need not be accountable to the likes of these.

The oppression and exploitation by Western vis-à-vis “primitive” cultures has been justified, incorrectly as it so happens in this case, on the basis of racial fictions. Those cultures were supposedly less than human or otherwise inferior. If I or my group were *actually* superior, however, and able to dominate the other, then does morality apply? If I can become stronger than others or independent of the aggregate on, say, technological bases, then why should I care about them?

It is part of my conclusion that conceptions of the good based only in human flourishing do not have the resources to *oppose* the Nietzschean move. That is, they have no recourse to the challenge he presents to a socially constructed authority. It is essential to an account of morality to specify the objective source of a norm such as the common good. And because any such difference in that end entails differences in the dispositional means to reach that end, it is also essential to reconsider the subjective structure of morality, what is required of the agent to satisfy the conditions of morally right behavior.

In Part Two, I set out my positive account of morality, one based in theological voluntarism. Professor MacIntyre has objections to such an account.

Part Two

A THEORY OF THEOLOGICAL VOLUNTARISM

NATURAL LAW AND THEOLOGICAL VOLUNTARISM

Review and preview

In Part One I developed some implications of MacIntyre's project and underscored much of the thrust of his argument. I began by asking why some contemporary natural lawyers in the Thomistic tradition avoid addressing the question of God in the discovery of the good. I suggested that this might be due to a line of reasoning that makes three assumptions. First, they conflate human flourishing and the good life. Therefore these natural lawyers apparently assume that an account of human flourishing is adequate as an account of the good life. Second, they seem to assume that the fully rational human subject cannot fail to will flourishing. Third, they also assume that the particulars of what this flourishing entails are wholly or largely known in social goods across fundamental cultural differences in conceptions of ultimate reality. And because the particulars of flourishing are known, at least in large part, the particulars of the moral norms required to realize that end are thereby known as well, through the kind of practical reasoning described by MacIntyre in his positive argument.

The earlier stages of MacIntyre's account show that the realization of any conception of the good does require at least the simulacra of genuine virtues. Far from guaranteeing the virtues as such, however, any given conception of the good requires only the dispositions relative to that conception. I have shown that virtues, goods, and practices all differ with respect to a social understanding of *the* good, so that none of these can be understood as freestanding. There is not just one practice of medicine, but multiple practices. Not just "the virtues" of courage, honesty, and justice, but context-specific understandings of virtues. Each varies according to the conception of

the good in question. This subordinate-to-the-ultimate-end structure underlines the determinative nature of the final end or *telos*. The virtues of each account are rightly considered simulacra by rival accounts of the virtues because of differences in the ends they serve. Differences in ends result in differences of motivation and intention constituting the dispositions serving those ends.

An account of morality can only be fully coherent if lesser goods are correlated and ordered to greater goods, always looking to a larger frame of reference for the justification of their ranking as goods. Human flourishing *is* partly constitutive of the good life, I want to say. But its high ranking is a contingent, not a necessary, ranking. The human good is positively related to the good as such and is partly constitutive of the good as such, but this says nothing about the ordering of this good to other goods. And to address, at all, the relationship of the human good to the good as such, we must adopt a larger frame of reference than that of human social goods. MacIntyre has not shown or even asserted the existence of such a comprehensive frame of reference. He has set aside Aristotle's metaphysical biology, but has not offered a satisfactory replacement. He has not offered a basis for believing that there *is* a correct conception of the good life independent of human will. On these premises, if we must choose between Aristotle and Nietzsche, then it is Nietzsche, by forfeit.

In Part Two, we switch ends. I set out a form of theological voluntarism as my positive argument. MacIntyre has often attacked theological voluntarism. I attempt to defend my position against those attacks. By making the ranking of human flourishing depend on the divine will, I say, theological voluntarism provides a better account of morality than eudaimonism, including theological eudaimonism.

In this chapter I try to extricate biblical theology from some of the distortions of Greek philosophy, particularly concerning divine will in the creation of matter. This question shapes how we understand the goodness of God. More to the point of the present confrontation, it

suggests that human flourishing is not an infallible basis for morality. I try to exploit the abandonment of the search for final causes in *scientific* discovery in order to question the necessity of flourishing as our necessary final end in *moral* discovery. The only dictate of natural law, strictly speaking, derives from the goodness of *God's* nature, not the potentialities of human nature. Chapter 8 develops these premises and considers their implications for divine authority. I argue that any role-player has a right to do anything entailed by what s/he *must* do. Authority, the right to rule, is derived from what the purported authority must do. In God's "role" as God, God gives us reasons for action in deciding the means to our ultimate end, union with God.

Chapter 9 shows what morality for the subject looks like on this construction. The eudaimonist account assumes the final end of human life to be flourishing, and in so doing, assumes certain limitations in the human will as well. It is a view of the human will denying that humans have the freedom to will goods *other than* those tied to their own flourishing. I will claim that although we have a natural inclination to human flourishing, moral freedom is tied to another inclination, the inclination to the pursuit of justice disinterestedly. This inclination can override the inclination to flourish. Humans have the volitional ability not only to conceptualize and to will human goods, but also the freedom to conceptualize and to will *purposes* independent of those goods of flourishing. Rectitude of will is more than simply the triumph of intellect over sensuality, the ability to seek our long-term flourishing in the face of the temptations of short-term gratification. It is the subject's ability to seek *the* good for its own sake.

Chapter 10 attempts to state my positive conclusions more succinctly and formally. I say that obligation is dependent on divine communicated intentions, and that this relationship of dependence is one of reduction; the concept of obligation could be dispensed of in favor of divine communicated intentions.

A typological illustration

We all know, MacIntyre claims, that “only laws that conform to reason *and justice* are genuine laws.” (2000, pp. 92f; emphasis added) But by “justice” here he apparently intends human flourishing, and human flourishing of a particular conception. In response to certain feminist and other criticisms of his theory of “practices,” MacIntyre suggests elsewhere that we may well criticize some practices as unjust. (1994, pp. 289f.) I understand this to mean that what we take to be the ranking assigned to the goods of some practices may turn out not to be just. We may be mistaken about their contribution to human flourishing. The additional point I wish to make is that, from the largest frame of reference, we could be mistaken about the contribution of such goods to the good life, as distinguishable from the flourishing life.

“Flourishing” can have many meanings, each with respective implications for virtuous dispositions, as my earlier chapters confirm. I want to push this observation even further by emphasizing God’s creative and legislative freedom. Nothing, other than the necessity that God be our ultimate good, could have posed an antecedent limitation on the divine stipulation of human ends in creation. That is, subordinate to our one final and necessary end of union with God, our ends could have been radically different.⁴² And even given the ends actually stipulated in the ordinances of creation, nothing prevents God from stipulating *means* to those ends that are radically different from a straight-line course of realization of those ends. My emphasis will be on this second claim, concerning God’s legislative freedom.

Why would God do something so weird as ordering us along a route to our final end that frustrates basic human potentiality? I do not believe that God does order us along such a route, or at least not usually. Consider briefly, however, an exception, a dispensation from

⁴² Stated more carefully and weakly, following Scotus, we don’t know that God could *not* have stipulated wildly different ends subordinate to our final end.

the supposedly eternal prescriptivity of the natural law as captured in the Second Table of the Decalogue. The binding of Isaac is an example often cited in theological voluntarism. It poses problems for the eudaimonistic natural law position. The example brings into relief the necessity of making explicit the exogenous purposes of human life. And it calls into question eudaimonistic conclusions of reason concerning nature, flourishing, and moral law.⁴³

Killing one's innocent child on God's command must qualify as a potential instance of making "good" what we would otherwise call "murder." This is what God tells Abraham to do. (Genesis 22) A basic social good, parenting one's progeny, is threatened. Abraham acts in spite of that knowledge, yet evidently without regrets or against conscience. He apparently believes that it is a just act, by virtue of God's desiring it. The rectitude of the act, however, is not only due to his *acting* in obedience, but also and more importantly for the present discussion, in *willing* God's willing for his willing. His desires are aligned with the means to his ultimate end that God seems to have willed for him in sacrificing Isaac. Abraham's right reason is engaged. The act is not irrational or under compulsion.

Nor does the act attribute capriciousness or irrationality to God, who has previously promised Abraham that it will be through *this* son that he will have descendants. How is that possible? Abraham thinks that God will resurrect Isaac.⁴⁴ All the textual and traditional evidence leads to this conclusion. Abraham tells his servants, "Stay here with

⁴³ In the "Treatise on Law," Aquinas simply presents this incident as concordant with God's prerogative. (ST 1-2.94.5) He later posits that the precepts of the Decalogue cannot be changed by dispensation, but that they can be changed in their application as to what constitutes murder, theft, or adultery. If God commands these acts, they are due, and are therefore not sins. (ST 1-2.100.3)

⁴⁴ *Hebrews* 11.17-19 explicitly reflects this common understanding. See also Levenson (1993). Traditionally, Christians further interpret the person of Isaac in the story and the particulars of this incident, as a typological prefiguring of the death *and resurrection* of Christ. Observant Orthodox Jews read and prayer over the *aqedah*, the binding of Isaac, at the Shacharit (morning) service every day of the year, and as the second Torah reading for Rosh HaShanna as the level of devotion possible to God.

the ass; I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again [*Ist per. pl.*] to you.” (Genesis 22.5. See Levenson 1993 for a comprehensive survey of the interpretive background.) At this stage in the biblical narrative, subsequent to the ordinances of creation, God’s ultimate intention is the full flourishing of humans, body and spirit, in order to be co-lovers (with God) of God. But the route by which Abraham and Isaac realize that end was a circuitous one indeed.

A full exegesis of the text is beyond my purposes here. I can only point to the essential structure of objective morality and of morality in the moral agent that the story illustrates. Had Abraham not obeyed God, his refusal to sacrifice his son would have been wrong. He focuses on the end rather than the route to that end. Though the route deviated radically from the normal route to union with God, his action is still good. Moral goodness is not just repeating God’s willing, mere conformity with God’s will, but “willing God’s willing for our willing.” (Hare 2001, p. 74) *Not* willing what God wants us to will in following the route God prescribes to our end, even if this refusal is in the pursuit of a (lesser) good, is evil. God’s intention for Abraham’s intention is that he should will God’s will above his own well-being and the well-being of his son.⁴⁵ The structure of morality, including the rationality of Abraham’s action, is best explained by

⁴⁵ God changes the command to Abraham. Does God have a change of heart? I don’t think so. The feature to track in the explanation of the change of command is the structure of moral rationality. God apparently wants Abraham to intend to kill Isaac, but not actually to kill him. Now, it seems impossible for humans to *intend* to do something that they have no reason to do. (The classic hypothetical case study is the Toxin Puzzle. See Kavka 1983.) If this is the case, then God couldn’t without self-contradiction command Abraham to have the intention without also having the reason. God doesn’t actually say that God wants Isaac dead. God commands Abraham to go to the mountain and to kill Isaac—not quite the same thing. God commands Abraham to act in such a way as to kill Isaac. And that is what Abraham does, right up to the point of striking/cutting with the knife, at which time God intervenes. Abraham forms the intention to kill his son. God intends one outcome, A, but to accommodate human psychology, commands another outcome, B, that entails outcome A. God commands outcome B, knowing that at the proper time, once outcome A had been realized, God will dispense from the command to produce outcome B. God’s ultimate intention remains the same, to realize only outcome A.

theological voluntarism. My aim in Part Two is to develop my version of this theory.

My position is theistic and this determinatively shapes my theory. Theological voluntarism, however, does not entail theism. One need not be a theist to be a theological voluntarist. On a normative version of theological voluntarism, for example, someone might claim that a being with the characteristics of God would merit obedience. But, s/he might go on to add, such a being does not exist. On metaethical versions of theological voluntarism, someone might claim that the concept of obligation is irreducibly theistic, but that, again, since there is no God, there are no genuine obligations. (See Murphy 2002b, sects. 1.1-1.2) David Gauthier then, for example, might be viewed as a theological voluntarist, working from negative premises. (See Gauthier 1991, pp. 20f.) With reference to the conclusions of Part One, theological voluntarism makes normative or metaethical claims about the necessary structure of moral argument. In the following, I hope to demonstrate that if flourishing is contingently an end of human life, as I think that it is, then flourishing cannot be the *ultimate* end of human life. Even if flourishing is contingently a sub-ultimate end of human life, as I think that it is, a straight-line course to this flourishing is not a dictate of natural law in the strictest sense. The possible routes to the realization of flourishing are innumerable.

Introduction to the chapter

Theistic eudaimonists in the Aristotelian tradition disengage human flourishing from God's purposes because they conceive of human beings as substances and substances as self-sustaining. Humans and other beings flourish to the extent that they realize their inherent potentialities as substances. They are initially created by God, to be sure, but are subsequently self-perpetuating. The same is true of entire systems of substances. So God's purposes are inherently actualized in the functioning of the being or system, unless foreign factors intervene, as in the case of human moral depravity. The formal

qualities of each being or system supervene on their functioning as substances. Thus, on this understanding, we need not bring God's purposes into the foreground.⁴⁶ My argument of Part One shows, however, that reference to such a background is indispensable, however inconspicuous its place in a theory. I have opened the possibility of a distinction between the flourishing life and the good life. Now I want to show why the background must be more explicit if we do not accept Aristotelian metaphysics.

Our understanding of the virtues flows from our interpretation of the human *telos*. MacIntyre's central negative conclusion is the incapacity of modern philosophy to derive moral requirements from human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be. A conception of the human end is necessary. My objection to modern versions of eudaimonism is that they cannot provide a structure from which to view the exogenous ends of human existence. Their conception of human ends derives only, primarily, or first from the intrinsic interests, needs, and vulnerabilities of humans *qua* humans. In the case of MacIntyre, this makes his argument vulnerable to the critique it set out to address. In defining human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be, we cannot avoid at least an implicit conception of the end(s) of human existence. To define the acorn's essence, we project the mature oak tree, as potential end, back onto the acorn. Human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be is the human end in potential. It is the oak tree as acorn. Our understanding of human-nature-as-it-is-if-it-reaches-its-potential determines what we understand of human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be. This is one implication of MacIntyre's argument. I agree with it. But what is the place of human flourishing relative to *the* good? As we saw in the last chapter, this relationship must at some point be made explicit. The necessity of evaluative judgment on the importance of human flourishing relative to other goods slips from view when eudaimonists draw only on human needs, interests, or vulnerabilities based in the human subject, in human flourishing. This link can only be *assumed*,

⁴⁶ I am indebted to Tim Stanton for clarification on these points.

and not made explicit, if it is somehow conceived of as a *necessary*, rather than a contingent link. This is what I take to be happening when eudaimonists with theistic commitments, for example, put forward a case for human flourishing without reference to God or to God's purposes for human life.

In this chapter, I hope to demonstrate that if flourishing is contingently an end of human life, as I think that it is, flourishing cannot be the ultimate end of human life. Following up my conclusions from Part One, I specifically invoke a theistic framework and consider God's intentions for human life. I say that the strict conclusions of natural law are much more limited than most natural lawyers assume. I suggest that these mistaken assumptions derive from a failure to appreciate the differences between classical and Christian understandings both of divine will and of the origins of the natural order. This difference eventually led to the abandonment of the Aristotelian approach to scientific discovery with respect to necessary final ends. Eudaimonistic natural lawyers should take this lesson to heart concerning the structure of morality.

Given that flourishing is contingently a sub-ultimate end of human life, as I think that it is, a direct course to this flourishing is not a dictate of natural law in the strictest sense. The possible routes to the realization of flourishing are countless.

But first I need to show that human flourishing is indeed not a necessary end, such that it can be known, assumed, and then passed over without mention or without reference to God's will. It is a contingent, not a necessary end. Human interests, needs, and vulnerabilities cannot be conceptually *separated* from human ends, to be sure, even if those interests, needs, and vulnerabilities were to be frustrated in the realization of our final end. The satisfaction of our interests, needs, and vulnerabilities is not, however, coterminous with our final end. To see why this is so, we need to juxtapose the classical and biblical accounts of the divine.

In what sense is God good?

Given the uniqueness and prior existence of God, I will suggest a way of understanding the goodness of divine being and divine actions that does not depend on human standards of justice. Theists of the biblical traditions have no decisive reason to believe that a sovereign God could not have willed other means to our end. A different form of human flourishing with resultant differences in natural law is not logically excluded by our material constitution. As counterintuitive as it seems to us because of our habituation to the way things are, God does not will the means to our final end *necessarily*—the means under consideration here are the achievement of our common good/social goods—as a function of our nature. And indeed nothing necessitates that God should will human flourishing in any usual sense of the term. I claim that the concepts of omnipotence and ex nihilo creation preclude the attribution of evil to an omnipotent being. These observations can nevertheless be made to fit the three-part Aristotelian structure of morality, though on radically different assumptions about human ends, and specifically by distinguishing those ends from flourishing.

Anselm addresses negatively the question of God's goodness as it relates to the attribute of omnipotence, by asking if God can sin. If God cannot sin, then how can God be omnipotent? His answer is that the ability to sin is not a power, but a lack of power. "So, then, when one is said to have the power of doing or experiencing what is not for his good, or what he ought not to do, impotence is understood in the word power." The more a person had of this so-called power, the more power "adversity and perversity" would have over that person. A person who had such power would be "capable of what is not for his good, and of what he ought not to do...." The more one had of such power, that is, the more powerless he or she would be over immorality. (Anselm 1926 (*Prologiom* 7)) This is not God's case. God cannot sin, and this is no limit on divine power. Positively stated, goodness is the power to accomplish one's good.

Two issues emerge here with respect to God's goodness: how God's power underlies, conceptually, any understanding we have of divine goodness, and what it means to say that God is good. Let's consider first what it might mean to say that God is good.

On MacIntyre's understanding of morality, there is a problem in speaking of the goodness of God, especially as it relates to humanity. In the Aristotelian model of morality, once again, the moral is tied to function. The humanly good is the sum of all those roles and responsibilities and goods that are entailed in being a good man. It is on the basis of the function of roles that we can derive value and obligation. A man's end determines what morality is for him. I have been arguing up to this point that only "*the good*" as a whole affords an adequately broad frame of reference to identify all the virtues as genuine, and further that this implies a transcendent frame of reference. I understand that transcendent frame of reference to be God Almighty.

If we attempt to evaluate the goodness of that transcendent frame of reference—in the present theory, God—we have to ask what the end of God is. It would be unacceptable to use "good" antecedently and so assume a deontological understanding of morality in this case alone when we have been using it otherwise up to this point. Yet the question also seems odd, misdirected, in light of all that I have said so far. The problem is the infinite regress of final causes. In what sense, then, is God good? On the Aristotelian understanding of "good" developed by MacIntyre, the goodness of the God who creates *ex nihilo* would consist in acting always in such a way as to accomplish the purposes of that on behalf of which God is acting. God would be good if God acts according to the inherent purposes of created things. But what are those purposes? It is God who establishes the purposes of everything. As the concept of God has been used in theism, God cannot have an end, a final cause, external to God. If God is good, then God is good in at least a *somewhat* different sense than the term

is used generally, since there is no larger frame of reference than God by which we can evaluate the goodness of God.

Comparing the conclusions of classical philosophy with the scriptural self-revelations of God, Aquinas questions the accuracy of unaided reason concerning, especially, the identity of the God worshiped according to the first several commandments of the Decalogue. (*ST* 1.1) And Aquinas argues for the necessity of Divine Law (i.e., sacred writ) in directing the agent in how to perform acts in view of his final end, which he says we cannot know by reason alone. (*ST* 1-2.91.4))

In view of this kind of limitation in reasoning by analogy “from below” concerning the nature of God’s goodness, we would do better to begin by asking what divine goodness means with respect to a given conception of God. Otherwise, human judgments of divine goodness run the risk of an error like that of using a wooden kitchen ruler to assess the accuracy of the official metric measure according to the International System of Units. The identity of the standard measure and that which it measures would be reversed. The created is in no position to judge the Creator, as Job learned. Valid theological science is *a posteriori* reasoning, thinking God’s thoughts after God. (See Torrance 1982/1999) In my account, there is only one antecedent constraint—a methodological constraint—to stipulate at the outset, the necessity of non-contradiction, or the necessity of non-self-contradiction. If God wills an end God must also will the means to that end. God is constrained by instrumental rationality as a logical necessity. (Or more precisely, perhaps, God is unwavering in resolve and undeterred in the realization of that resolve, so that logic itself is a function of divine constancy, not the reverse.) This is a necessary methodological constraint on any account we can give of God’s actions.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Descartes thought an omnipotent being could do anything, including the self-contradictory, and that Aquinas’ position dishonored God by making God subject to a law, the law of non-contradiction. The Cartesian position is unassailable. That is because it is

So, following the patristic tradition, I take the scriptural assertion “No one is good but God alone” (*Mark* 10.18) as particularly relevant to our discussion. God’s goodness is a brute fact. God is good in a unique and underived sense. Can we conceive of God’s goodness as having any necessary content with respect to anything external to God? Does divine rationality constrain God? The other qualities of God do not impose constraints on what God can do that do not already follow from logical consistency. Given that God is God, the only constraint on those purposes is with respect to the divine person.

There seems to be no way to set God’s goodness as a conceptual constraint on what God can or cannot do relative to the creation. No purpose of a created being could negate God’s goodness, for example. God, and only God, is the ultimate end and purpose of any created being. God is not constrained by divine rationality with respect to what God creates and how God deals with that creation.

Many critics of theological voluntarism attack claims concerning God’s *legislative* rationality, whether God’s rationality puts constraints on what God can will with regard to the moral law. There is however the more general issue of God’s *creative* rationality, what kinds of worlds and creatures God can create and how God can treat the creation. Williams (2000b) notes that when these two levels of divine rationality are not distinguished in the literature, it is usually in

inconceivable. As Mackie says, any argument depends on the laws of logic and reasoning. To assert that God ordained the laws of logic and math that obtain in the world as we know it and yet could have done otherwise, is to remove the discussion from rational enquiry. It is fruitless to continue discussion. A self-contradictory action is not a thing. “A logical contradiction is not a state of affairs which it is supremely difficult to produce, but only a form of words which fails to describe any state of affairs.” (Mackie (1962) “Omnipotence” *Sophia* 1: 16, cited in Nash 1983, pp. 39-40.) The position cannot be attacked, but neither can it be defended. The position is in fact not a position. It cannot even be articulated coherently. Whatever Descartes and other defenders of a supralogical God want to express is something that cannot be expressed in rational discourse, but is necessarily a self-defeating non-sense. As Nash says, “A supralogical God is a God about whom nothing can be said or known.” (Nash 1983, pp. 39-40) Constraint or no, this qualification will be important to answering objections to theological voluntarism.

the context of a close (and broad) association between essential natures and natural law. Natural law, it is said, must fit our natures.

The only end God *necessarily* wills, I say, is God's own good. (I follow Williams 2000b, sect. 3.a on Scotus' position here.) Because it is God who creates everything, it is for God that everything (else) is intended, ultimately. God wills the existence of any thing, and brings it into existence, and the purpose or good of the thing just is that for which God has created it.

God's will is good because it is without any external constraint by which it could possibly be otherwise. *What God wills is necessarily good*. God's will and God's power to accomplish that will therefore must be understood as conceptually prior to God's rationality and goodness. This claim involves a confrontation with classical views of divine will.

Classical and biblical understandings of divine will

The classical and biblical perspectives radically differ on the question of divine will and the status of matter (eternal or created). As a result, they radically differ on the implications of their respective positions concerning final ends and divine freedom. If basic matter is eternal, then at least some parameters or laws governing matter must also be eternal. The implications of the doctrine of creation for natural science and morality are therefore foundational. It was to no small extent the rejection of the classical perspective concerning divine will and freedom that led to modern empirical methodology in the natural sciences. Because we cannot presume to know with certitude God's purposes, Descartes, Newton, Galileo, and Bacon reasoned, we cannot antecedently determine final causes in the natural sciences. We must therefore proceed empirically. This conclusion followed from their cosmological presuppositions. As we will see, the turn from the methodology of final causes in the natural sciences is a consequence of, not a phenomenon arising independently of, theological

voluntarism.⁴⁸ The fruitfulness of this turn lends credibility to that theological shift. And just as natural science proceeds on the basis of empirical phenomena rather than speculation about God's necessary intentions,⁴⁹ so too should we proceed by *a posteriori* reasoning about what is or is not possible in ethics, rather than setting antecedent limitations on what God could will on a Platonically-influenced view of the material. I want to retrace the thinking of the "new men of science" to these presuppositions, then argue from those presuppositions that we cannot antecedently know the intermediate final ends of human nature. Following Scotus, I say that the only natural laws that can be known deductively, from the very terms used,

⁴⁸ This claim is contrary to MacIntyre's implication in *Whose Justice?* (1988, p. 209)

⁴⁹ It is in this light that we should understand, for example, comments by Francis Bacon about the sterility of inquiry into final causes (2004, chap.7, sect. 7):

For the handling of final causes, mixed with the rest in physical inquiries, hath intercepted the severe and diligent inquiry of all real and physical causes, and given men the occasion to stay upon these satisfactory and specious causes, to the great arrest and prejudice of further discovery. [...] For to say that "the hairs of the eyelids are for a quickset and fence about the sight;" or that "the firmness of the skins and hides of living creatures is to defend them from the extremities of heat or cold;" [...] is well inquired and collected in metaphysic, but in physic they are impertinent. [...] not because those final causes are not true and worthy to be inquired, being kept within their own province, but because their excursions into the limits of physical causes hath bred a vastness and solitude in that tract. For otherwise, keeping their precincts and borders, men are extremely deceived if they think there is an enmity or repugnancy at all between them. For the cause rendered, that "the hairs about the eyelids are for the safeguard of the sight," doth not impugn the cause rendered, that "pilosity is incident to orifices of moisture—muscosi fontes, &c." Nor the cause rendered, that "the firmness of hides is for the armour of the body against extremities of heat or cold," doth not impugn the cause rendered, that "contraction of pores is incident to the outwardest parts, in regard of their adjacence to foreign or unlike bodies;" and so of the rest, both causes being true and compatible, the one declaring an intention, the other a consequence only. Neither doth this call in question or derogate from Divine Providence, but highly confirm and exalt it. For as in civil actions he is the greater and deeper politique that can make other men the instruments of his will and ends, and yet never acquaint them with his purpose, so as they shall do it and yet not know what they do, than he that imparteth his meaning to those he employeth; so is the wisdom of God more admirable, when Nature intendeth one thing and Providence draweth forth another, than if He had communicated to particular creatures and motions the characters and impressions of His Providence. And thus much for metaphysic; the latter part whereof I allow as extant, but wish it confined to his proper place.

are those that derive from the divine nature, those that relate to the inherent goodness of God, for example. I begin by contrasting Greek and biblical cosmologies on questions of natural law, necessity/contingency, final causes, and divine will.

It is well-known that antiquity had no concept of human will as we think of it. Albrecht Dihle shows that the classical world had no equivalent of the biblical concept of divine will either. It was not until about 170 CE that the Greeks fully grasped the difference between Greek and biblical cosmology. This difference centered on these concepts of will, human and divine, and is most clearly seen in Seneca's statement, *Non pareo deo sed assentior*. ("I do not obey God; rather, I agree with Him.") The Greek demiurge was not so much a creator as a fashioner or shaper of eternal matter, and was therefore limited by the laws of a given reality in a way that Yahweh is not with respect to the on-going activity of creation. The Elder Pliny wrote: "Not even for god are all things possible... he cannot bestow eternity on mortals... he cannot cause twice ten not to be twenty or do other things along similar lines, and these facts unquestionably demonstrate the power of nature." And Seneca again: "They who believe the gods do not *want* to do harm are mistaken; the gods *cannot*." (cited in Dihle 1982, p. 18)

Although these conceptions are often polytheistic in contradistinction to Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, the essential point holds across the spectrum. The question of *will* does not emerge in these conceptions because the rationality/reasons by which the divine is constrained to order the world are the same rationality/reasons that constrain human will. The Platonists follow a much more stringent philosophical reasoning than some popular notions of religion on divine activity. Yet even they cannot conceive of compliance with God's commands without understanding what God's intentions are beyond those commands. And the just intentions of both the human and the divine are constrained by the demands of justice conceived apart from the divine.

The biblical account, by contrast, depicts a God unaccountable to external standards of rationality. Yahweh does not lie or act in self-contradiction in any way, but neither does God offer any other assurance of this consistency than the consistency of the divine being and authority. Nor does God always offer to demonstrate how this consistency plays out. As their sovereign, God does however make an unconditional commitment to the welfare of those in the divine covenant. Turning the traditional covenant form on its head God invokes the penalties of covenant violation on the divine person as suzerain, rather than on Abraham as the subjugated vassal. (See Genesis 15.) This commitment is self-imposed, *not* a given of Platonic justice. The Greeks discovered this difference so late because they inevitably analyzed and interpreted exotic religions on the basis of a supposed vestigial natural knowledge of the cosmos enjoyed by all humankind in primeval times. As Dihle notes, they were looking for agreement between Plato and Moses.

Why is Dihle's observation important? Notice the resemblance between this natural knowledge and many natural law positions on one point: both *assume* the absolute standing of their presuppositions concerning necessary final causes. The Aristotelian conception of the world limited the growth of natural science until the modern era. The Aristotelian emphasis on final causes and eternal forms effectively turned attention from empirical phenomena. Progress in science was pursued through the search for eternal patterns from which particulars were deduced, and the search for insight into the essences of natural objects from which behavior was then deduced. Socrates posits that to discover how any particular thing is ordered, it suffices to consider how it is best that it should be ordered, because this turns out to be the way that the thing is ordered. (*Phaedo* 97d) This broadly rationalist approach characterizes the Aristotelian tradition in the natural sciences.

Some Christian thinkers in the Aristotelian tradition took this view as an implication of the assurance of Paul the Apostle that all things

work together for good. (Romans 8.28) As John Baillie points out, though, the new scientists made two important caveats. First, even if all particulars are derived from a pattern in the divine mind, we do not know that pattern antecedently. Bacon, Descartes and others take it as a matter of faith that the pattern is hidden. We cannot by *a priori* reasoning or necessary truths assuredly know God's purposes. We can only know what is. Secondly, the supposition of an *eternal* pattern entails that God had to make the world just as it has turned out to be. This denied the kind of freedom that theological voluntarism claimed for divine action. (Baillie 1952, pp. 19-25)

Despite an awareness since Galen (see *On the Uses of the Parts* xi, 14) of the differences between the Mosaic and Platonic cosmologies, Aristotelian conceptions of divine impassibility greatly influenced medieval notions of God. On those conceptions, all created things have existence only as the objects of the eternal knowing and willing of God and their creaturely existence is directly grounded in the eternity of God. As T.F. Torrance notes, the early schoolmen do indeed reject the notion of the world as the emanation of God and the necessity of the world as linked to the necessity of the divine nature. But their thinking retains much of the same notion of the hierarchy of being, obscuring somewhat the Creator-creature distinction. Their conception implies "an eternal positing or even co-existence of creaturely being with God's eternal Being" making the denial of *aeternitas mundi* difficult. In *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes*, Aquinas argues that there is no contradiction between affirming that something is created and that it was never non-existent (Torrance 1969, pp. 59-60n1).

This sense that creation is in some sense co-existent with God connotes the intelligibility of the natural order, an essential presumption of empirical science, but it also entails that real knowledge is only possible through the understanding of eternal patterns. It undercuts contingency, another pillar of modern empirical science. Aquinas, following Aristotle, believes that the intelligence

only knows universals, whereas the senses know contingents. To the extent that the intellect knows contingents, it does so only indirectly and as they contain elements of necessity. “Hence if we consider the objects of science in their universal principles, then all science is of necessary things.” (*ST* 1.86.3) So discerning final causes is the surest form of exploration in the natural sciences.

By contrast, there is strong evidence that the shift to modern empirically-based science can be traced to the theological voluntarism of Scotus and Ockham. Contrary to popular retelling, it is not at all the case that Galileo, Descartes, Boyle, and Newton reject the *concept* of final causes or God’s purposes. Rather, they are frustrated with final causes as explanations. They want explanations that can allow cumulative insights into natural processes, efficient causes.⁵⁰ More importantly for this discussion, they reject the belief that we can *know* final causes with certainty through unaided reason. This rejection is theologically driven. God is not bound by rationalist presuppositions. It is this conviction that enables these pioneers and others to undertake their work without the constraints of an Aristotelian theory of nature. (Davis 1984; Foster 1936a; Foster 1936b; and see Boyle 1996) The result is not theoretical incoherence or conclusions detached from reason. Rather, this theological understanding prepares them to find a stranger form of consistency and harmony than was conceptually possible under Aristotelian rationalism. The methodological implications of the differences between the Aristotelian and biblical worldviews are monumental. In a seminal essay, M.B. Foster says,

⁵⁰ This criticism of Aristotelianism is more directed at scholastic metaphysicians than at Aristotle. For my purposes, however, the distinction is not relevant. The focus of the criticism is divine rationalism (Aristotle, Aquinas, et al.) over against divine voluntarism (Scotus, Ockham, et al.).

[T]he method of Galilean science [...] presupposes (a) that it is impossible that nature should not embody a mathematically intelligible scheme and exhibit laws mathematically definable; but (b) that, which of possible alternative schemes it embodies, and which of several laws equally definable mathematically it exhibits, can be decided only by appeal to observation and experiment. (Foster 1936b, p. 34)

Thus the new Scotist theological paradigm associates intelligibility with contingency. The world is understandable but consistently weird, challenging conventional assumptions. God's creative activity is contingent on divine will and therefore can only be known empirically. It is wrongheaded to assume that we can deductively discern purposes, in the common usage of the term, in nature.

The relevance for moral philosophy is this. For precisely the same reason, we should not assume that humanoid flourishing is a metaphysical necessity. Its relationship to a comprehensive understanding of the good cannot be antecedently deduced. Cultural conclusions concerning human flourishing differ significantly. More basically, we have no reason to think that human flourishing is rationally a cosmological given any more than is the flourishing of the dinosaurs. Just as the natural order is contingent beyond the imagination of Aristotle and his heirs, so also is the moral order as it relates to the natural order. There is no reason to think that the moral order could not have been otherwise. Nothing prevented God from stipulating other means to our final end as co-lovers of God. The contingency of *both* the natural and the moral orders stands in contradistinction to the Aristotelian paradigm of antecedently-knowable final causes. The full significance of this claim will only be apparent in conjunction with a difference in the Scotist understanding of subjective human freedom to will other than our flourishing, to be examined later in chapter 9. For objective morality, the significance is this. We should not assume that we can arrive by reason at a certain

knowledge of God's purposes for human life even in the natural realm.

To be sure, moral psychology necessitates coming to conclusions concerning our final end. We form hypotheses about our final ends for the purposes of ordering our common life together. And as Part One demonstrated, these conclusions provide at least the simulacra of the moral virtues, divergent as these conclusions are. According to the biblical traditions, God has made something of divine purposes known in what harmonizes with our developed nature. The extent of that knowledge is notoriously controversial, even within those traditions. Natural lawyers typically underestimate the direct and indirect influence of the Bible itself on conclusions about moral norms, and therefore underestimate the diversity of conclusions possible in reasoning to natural law. Even the injunctions of the Second Table are problematic. Scotus thinks that Paul the Apostle, for example, is saying what he seems to be saying when he says that without "the law" (the Decalogue), he would not have known that coveting was wrong. (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 199)

We might hope that the moral order happens to coincide with the flourishing of our nature as social/biological/rational/spiritual beings. Without reason to think otherwise, we might even assume that this is the case, and such a postulate would turn out to be correct, I think. God's will *is* for our natural flourishing, at least in general. It would be correct to infer a "fit" between our dispositions and our environment, following exactly the kind of rational processes for the achievement of human goods seen in the previous chapters, *if* this inference were viewed as a function of gracious providence, not as a given of metaphysical necessity.⁵¹

⁵¹ The biblical authors seem to take this fit between our dispositions and our environment as an act of grace, not a given, even with respect to human life prior to human depravity. (See, for example, Psalms 8.4ff.; 104.18ff; cp. Job 39.13ff.) Nothing in these comments or in my argument should be interpreted as an explanation of *how* ("efficient cause") this fit comes about.

It turns out that human goods are high-ranking goods from a divine perspective. Because God wills human flourishing, deductions about the requirements of morality from human flourishing turn out to be correct, as far as they go, contingent upon that divine will. But God should not be understood to have been under any external compulsion to will our flourishing. And whether because it is God's will or by virtue of some other cosmology, the ranking of the human good is relative to what we understand to be *the* good. Without that contingent dependence, human flourishing as a grounding of morality is merely an anthropocentric presumption. The purpose of human life cannot be conclusively derived from flourishing understood on its own merits without reference to God's will.

At this point I must begin to address positively and directly my theory of theological voluntarism in the biblical tradition. A central conclusion of this theory will be divine freedom with regard to the ends of human existence.

Classical and biblical understandings of origins

Biblical theological voluntarism presents the structure of moral argument in the form of an assertion about the genesis of the moral order. What Part One gropingly referred to as "*the* good", I am asserting now, is the God of the biblical narrative. The relationship between *the* good and the good life is definitional. The good life is the life directed toward God and that according to the will of God. The framework or "context" in which we should understand the establishment of the moral order is an *absence* of context. God Almighty existing in self-sufficiency prior to time, space and matter freely creates and legislates out of the plenitude of God's being. Everything other than God, whether temporal or material or conceptual, is a function of God's will and power. So, as John Duns Scotus puts it, "[E]verything other than God is good because it is willed by God, and not vice versa..." (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 16) If we consider the concept of Yahweh in the original context of Genesis,

and not only in the medieval developments and syntheses of that concept, we can more easily see the importance of this God's identity as Creator.

The Hebrew prophets constantly refer to the differences between their God and the local deities of the Ancient Near East, differences following from the biblical account of creation. Over against the polytheistic theomachy and theogamy of the Mesopotamian deities, the personification of the planets and the elements, and above all the underlying moral dualism of those cosmologies, God is unique.

Yahweh creates alone. There is not a hint even of the existence of evil in the creation story. As the tragic events unroll leading to separation from the good life and especially from God, evil does not make a dramatic entrance as a counterbalancing force. It appears in the form of deception and doubt, so that it is not even clear there exactly how evil comes into the picture, except as a misdirection of goodness.

Throughout the Hebrew scriptures, but especially in rivalry with other pretended deities, it is God's creative power that sets Yahweh apart from and above rival deities, which the Hebrew prophets usually deride as non-existent. It is the conception of God as Almighty Creator that is foundational to divine authority.⁵²

Building from this premise, the biblical God is the beginning and the end of everything else, and any purpose God has in creating those things must be self-referential. God is perfectly happy prior to creation. God does not act therefore out of need, constraint or external obligation, but freely and out of the plenitude of divine joy and being. "All that the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps." (Psalm 135.6) God therefore takes pleasure in all that

⁵² What is a point of commonality between the religions of the rest of the Ancient Near East and the Hebrews, and every moral theory to the present, is the notion that first principles in social theory are in some relation of dependence to a tradition's theory of origins. For a postmodern example in how this observation applies to secular theory, an approach in the tradition of Augustine's theory of the two cities, see Milbank (1990).

God does and all God's acts are overflowing demonstrations of that plenitude. (Piper, 2000, pp. 50f)

In view of the excellences of the divine being, God loves God. This love is perfect; God unfailingly pursues God's own advantage. Goodness and justice in this context must be understood with respect to the infinite value and worth of God. To the extent that we can conceive of such a state of affairs, it makes no sense to speak of God's justice prior to creation as anything *other* than God's love for God's own interest and unfailing pursuit of that interest. Absent something external to God, this divine love for God's own interest must be unconstrained. Whatever God desires, whatever pleases God, just is right. In the subsequent condition of subjective moral creatures, the difference between the love of what is good and right on one hand, and the love of what is to the creature's advantage, on the other, are critical to morality. But the desire for God's own interest and the desire for justice cannot come into tension in God's self, if indeed it makes sense to speak of God's desire for justice as distinct from divine interest. (See Williams 2000b, sect. 2.b.)

What changes once we begin to consider God's goodness with respect to creation? How do the divine love, justice, and rationality constrain divine actions with regard to creation? In effect, nothing significantly changes. If to act justly is to give everything its due, then how is God just to creation? God cannot be understood as owing anything to creation, since God creates everything from an unconstrained will, and for no other purpose than whatever God wills. (MacIntyre concurs in 1985, p. 368.)

Many scholars have tried to mitigate the conclusions of noted voluntarists in order to make them more palatable. Thomas Williams (2000b) illustrates the failure of these mitigating attempts, in demonstrating just how radical John Duns Scotus, for example, is. Williams evokes an analogy of a type often used to demonstrate constraints on God's creative rationality. Suppose there is a professor

of philosophy whose sole commitment is to the pursuit of truth. This high-minded and Platonistic inclination entails that she has no obligation to her students as such. But, the argument goes, this obviously does not mean that the professor may attain her purpose regardless of how she treats her students, since mistreatment of her students could compromise the attainment of that purpose. She will treat her students well, though only as a means to her purpose. Likewise, while God's only *a priori* interest is in God's own interests, God's treatment of creatures will rise above the absence of obligation these creatures can impose of themselves in order to fulfill divine purposes.

But, says Williams, if the professor in the analogy could reach her purpose *regardless* of her treatment of her students, then there could be no obligation on her part to treat her students in any particular way. This situation is much closer to that of God. God can love Godself regardless of how God treats creatures. There seems no way of God's dealing with creatures that is necessary to the fulfillment of the sole obligation to the divine person. If, antecedently, God is constrained only to love the divine being, then nothing God does with respect to anything God has created could be wrong.

If God has *in fact* subsequently made commitments to certain intermediate ends with respect to the creation, a great deal changes. These willed goods and ends would form a self-imposed constraint of whatever duration has been promised. On my understanding, God has in fact treated human beings with anything but the indifference corresponding to this analogy. *In fact*, God's treatment is the highest beneficence imaginable, and what we do not yet know of it, Paul the Apostle says, is beyond human imagination. Furthermore, this divine commitment is not subsequent to God's creative act ("...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13.8)

The argument here is about what God's justice entails *necessarily*. God's treatment of the creation cannot be constrained by divine

justice. Human flourishing is contingent, not a logical necessity following from eternal patterns or laws of nature. How far can this claim be carried? What can God, without self-contradiction, rationally do in creative and legislative freedom?

Are there limits to what God can rationally and justly legislate?

Scotus thinks that the only necessary final end determined by nature is God. This natural law is a function of the unchangeable nature of *God*. Any intermediate ends are up to God's will.

Critics such as MacIntyre (1985) agree with much of what I have just said concerning God's creative freedom. But they concentrate on God's legislative freedom, what God can legislate that we should do. The most common criticism of theological voluntarism is that it entails arbitrariness on God's part. It is to this accusation of arbitrariness that I now turn. So far I have tried to establish that it is God who sets the ends and purposes of all creatures and that it is misconceived to think of God's goodness before the existence of created entities and the ends for which they are created. But theological voluntarism also seems to endorse the possibility that God can make an evil action good by fiat. The classic objection to theological voluntarism is that God could tell us to commit murder, adultery or theft.

From the standpoint of theological voluntarism, many objections to that theory represent the obverse and reverse of a single coinage. Either these objections contain implicit assumptions that *entail* a contrary account of morality, or they contain implicit assumptions *derived from* a contrary account on morality. Theological voluntarism entails that the coin of our moral order could have been different, and indeed could change somewhat from what it is now. Other than the obligation to reach our final end, the truths of morality are objective truths, but we have no reason to assume that they are necessary truths.

Two matters of linguistic housekeeping must be addressed at the outset. First, “murder,” “adultery,” and “theft” are all actions wrong by definition, so that a “rightful murder” is an oxymoron. It is a nonsense that of course cannot be defended. Notice that the basic problem with this characterization of the theory does not change if we acknowledge that it is an oxymoron, but then insist that divine voluntarism makes God capable of commanding acts we believe to be unjust. Of course it’s counter-intuitive. But is it right? If the criticism is simply intended as a warning that the theory runs counter to our basic intuitions, then it should be stated thus. Such a warning summons us to examine the validity of the argument for the theory, but then is not mistaken for an argument against it. Stated as an argument, the objection simply imports an understanding of justice independent of God in order to attack a theory that claims that morality is *not* independent of God. Every theory of ethics leads to conclusions that rival theories call unjust. If the theory in question is correct, then the others are wrong.

Second, we should use the term “arbitrary” carefully. For the purposes of this argument, “arbitrary” could be understood in one of two ways. If arbitrary means “without reference to a standard or law other than those established by God’s own will”—*arbitrium*, in Latin—then it is of course no substantive objection that the theory makes morality arbitrary, since this is precisely the claim of theological voluntarism. If, on the other hand, arbitrary means “whimsical” or “capricious” and therefore “contradictory” or “irrational” then this is an important objection.⁵³ Does the theory entail irrational or contradictory decision-making? Can the biblical God make what we might otherwise understand as an instance of injustice a rightful act? God does not act

⁵³ Hare notes also that this second meaning of “arbitrary” connotes a reason that is not being given due consideration. (2000, p. 3) Objectors to theological voluntarism say that the accommodation of human flourishing constitutes a decisive reason for God’s choice of routes to human union with God. This claim presupposes the rationalist position. I deny it below.

irrationally or contradictorily, yet is not constrained to act in a way that will satisfy our intuitions here.

MacIntyre's most complete objection to theological voluntarism appeals to our knowledge of God's promulgated law as it relates to our nature. This nature is not presented as descriptively value-free, he says. (1986, p. 367) We must assume human goods and ends here in order to deduce morality from human nature.

Scotist moral philosophy reformulates the relationship between morality and nature. As in Aristotelian eudaimonism, Scotus gives a relational account of our ends and means to those ends.⁵⁴ The central relationship is not with other humans, however, but with God. The love within the Trinity is paradigmatic. God must love the divine essence, according to Scotus. Since God creates everything else, God must will also that everything else seek God as its final end. Humans are uniquely able to do so as a free act. It is God who designates the way to this end. The only necessary end a human or any other entity in creation has *by nature* is the love of God as underived good. Scotist ethics are grounded in nature, but only in this most basic sense of *divine* nature. The only necessary laws of human nature are those relative to God. Only the First Table of the Decalogue (the first three commandments directly concerning God), therefore, is the law of nature in the strictest sense. "What pertains to the law of nature is either a practical principle known immediately from its terms or necessary conclusions that follow from such principles. In either case they possess necessary truth." (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 199) All other natural law is only so in a secondary way. The Second Table (the last seven commandments concerning how to love our neighbor) is only fitting and contingent and thus a loose sort of natural law. This conclusion is at odds with Thomistic natural law theories that see all

⁵⁴ My understanding of Scotus is indebted to the accounts of John Hare (2001) and Thomas Williams (1998; 2000).

Ten Commandments, at least, as necessary and irrevocable dictates of the natural law.⁵⁵

In previous chapters I have tried to show that goods and ends flow out of a larger understanding of *the* good, and are ranked as goods by virtue of their contribution to that larger good. Here also I want to emphasize the contingent nature of the relationship between our natural good and our final end, with the conclusion that morality is not tied to specific means to that end. We are quite used to the way things are. Our thinking is premised on the given-ness of the current order and sets about trying to understand this order. Theological voluntarism questions the necessity of this order. The fact that union with God is our final end does not make any natural good protected by the second table *the* way to reach that final end. Nothing prevents God from willing another route to our final end as co-lovers with God of the divine nature.

Unconventional understandings of human flourishing are conceivable. The variations in the “social interaction” of animal species suggest that human flourishing could be at least somewhat different, were our ends different. Natural law thinking and some questionable forms of scientific hypothesizing may push us to see necessary norms in the Second Table where they do not exist. Scotus notes that if the primary end of marriage were childbearing, for example, polygamy would seem to be indicated. (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 210) He believes that commandments such as honoring one’s parents and respecting the lives, property and spouses of others fit well with our ultimate end Yet we do not know that God could not have stipulated another way in each instance. (*Ord.* 3, d. 37, n. 8 cited in Williams 1998) Perhaps we could have essentially the same natures as now, but also have different means to reach those ends and purposes of our nature. It is not inconceivable that humans could thrive under a context of communal

⁵⁵ Scotus’ understanding of the Second Table as the dictates of practical reason is similar to Aquinas’. The difference is that Scotus doesn’t think that natural law with respect to the goods inherent in the fulfillment of human nature is natural law in the strict sense.

property and even communal families, thus voiding the relevance of commands against theft, adultery, covetousness, and especially honoring one's biological parents. It requires more effort to imagine circumstances under which killing the innocent would not impede the fulfillment of our nature. And an example of dispensing from the necessity of truth-telling would require a separate argument, perhaps built on a world where mind-reading were possible, again with the stipulation against logical contradiction. And as the story of the binding of Isaac shows, divine intervention limitlessly expands the options, *in extremis*. Theists open to such a possibility must account for it in the structure of the morally possible.

It should also be noted that several conclusions reasonably drawn from our natures are *not* confirmed by divine revelation. People with no physical or psychological anomalies, for example, may live rich, full, celibate lives *without* following the obvious indications of their nature in genital sexuality. Martyrs, heroes, hermits, prophets, geniuses, artists often do not attain anything like the standard of the good life as we conceive of it. Some lives seem to make up in brilliance what they lack in duration. These examples suggest a looser connection between what our natures indicate and conventions in moral norms.

The point here is *not* that the constraints found in the Decalogue are not binding. God has willed their obligatory status and so they are binding. The point is that, contrary to the Thomist account, the dictates of the Second Table are binding neither by metaphysical necessity nor by natural law in the strictest, analytic (*per se nota ex terminis*) sense. The distinction here enables Scotus to distinguish the morality of the act from the act itself more sharply than in the Thomist theories of natural law that preceded his. It is not merely acting in accord with our nature or any natural good that makes an action moral. Nor does mere obedience or conformity with right behavior ensure that an action demonstrates virtue. Genuine virtue requires not only the right action, but also right intention. An act may appear

virtuous, but we can only know that it *was* virtuous if we know *why* the person acted thus. (MacIntyre 1991)

Are omnipotence and evil compatible concepts?

Is this shaping up to be the characterization of God that so repels critics of theological voluntarism, a god capable of the most horrible things imaginable, an evil being, by any other account?⁵⁶ For many critics, particularly non-theists, this seems to be exactly the result expected. I will begin to defend my position against this criticism by modifying an argument by Paul Rooney. This thought experiment is not the focus of my argument because it deals in possible worlds different from ours. Nevertheless, it calls into question some of the basic presuppositions of eudaimonistic rationalism.⁵⁷

Rooney (1996b, pp. 39ff) proposes three ways in which we might conceive of an “omnipotent demon.” I here modify the argument to ask *if an omnipotent being capable of doing evil is a coherent concept*. I say that it is not.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ This may or may not be part of MacIntyre’s critique in “Which god...? (1985). On one hand, he recognizes that God owes nothing to creation; he says his objection concerns what God can order *us* to do, contrary to morality as he understands it. On the other hand, it contrasts with MacIntyre’s comments there and in *Three Rival Versions* (1990: 155) about how we judge the goodness of God as a test of practical authority: “If a believer in an omnipotent Nobodaddy is apparently confronted by a divine action which seems to him or her from the standpoint which he or she has hitherto adopted the infliction of an unjust gratuitous and unmerited harm upon him or her by Nobodaddy, he or she has no good reason to rule out the possibility that matters just are as they seem to be: Nobodaddy has inflicted or has commanded the infliction by someone else of just such a harm.” (1985, p. 360)

⁵⁷ This section is highly speculative. Its theological novelty is mitigated somewhat by its purpose as a *via negativa*, rather than as a positive conclusion concerning the divine nature.

⁵⁸ In his objections to theistic voluntarism, Daniel Goldstick (1974) says that the claim that whatever God happens to will is good is equivalent to the claim that there could not be an omnipotent demon. Paul Rooney accepts the validity of this equivalence. While one evil act by any other being would not necessarily make that being a demon, one evil act by God *could* have the same effect. If, Rooney illustrates, God gave the entire body of sacred writ but maliciously neglected to inform us that its assertions are only correct if preceded by the phrase, “It is not the case that...”, then this would seem, in effect, to have the same consequence as repeated demonic activity.

How might we conceive of an omnipotent being doing evil?

1. The being determines what is to be called good and what is to be called bad, and then acts such that its actions are bad.
2. The being creates a world and humanoids to live in it, decides what will lead to humanoid flourishing, and then acts so as to make it impossible for humanoids to attain that flourishing.
3. The being inflicts pain on its creatures, torturing animalic creatures and humanoids in particular. (Adapted from Rooney 1996b, p. 41)

The first case entails a simple contradiction in the being's will.

“Good” and “bad” must entail, “willed to be done” and “willed to be avoided” and therefore presumably “wants to be done” and “wants to

So if an omnipotent demon is impossible, then the first claim is correct. Whatever God wills is necessarily good. (Rooney 1996b, pp. 39ff)

Rooney makes a logical error here in accepting Goldstick's equivalence of “Whatever God wills is good” and “There could be no omnipotent demon.” The former entails the latter, but not vice versa. An objector might wonder, that is, if this being could do one or more evil acts that did *not* in effect make the being the equivalent of an omnipotent demon. Such a being would not be good in the way divine voluntarists claim that God is good, but would the being really be an omnipotent *demon*? Could it be shown that if an omnipotent being could do any evil, then it is in effect an omnipotent demon? Perhaps, but in any case, I deny the antecedent and that is all that is necessary. Because I think that both claims are impossible, it is sufficient to show that it is impossible for an omnipotent being to do evil. Goldstick's equivalence should be modified as follows. To say that whatever God wills is necessarily good *not only* means that there can be no such thing as an omnipotent demon, but also that *there can be no omnipotent being that does evil*. If the concept of an omnipotent being that does evil is incoherent, then *a fortiori* so is the concept of an omnipotent demon.

In addition to modifying his conclusion as just mentioned, I use a key term differently. Divine voluntarists such as Rooney pose an unnecessary barrier to the theory's acceptance when they use the term “human” with respect to alternate worlds. On a Christian view of things, “human” connotes “made in God's image,” “fallen,” “the substance of the incarnation, death, resurrection, glorification, second advent, and future form of Christ,” and so forth. To speak of the “human” is therefore to invoke, by connotation, divine promises and purposes, and therefore a vast number of self-imposed limits on what God can do. Jewish and Christian notions of what it means to be human greatly influence the moral presuppositions of those within the Western world, even those who do not accept those notions. And if the Christian view is correct, then those outside the Western world probably recognize something following from these characteristics also. So I refer to these speculative creatures as “humanoid” rather than “human.”

be avoided.” It makes no sense—it involves a self-contradiction—that an omnipotent being would want something to be done and then avoid it, or not want it done and then do it. (Rooney 1996b, p. 41)

Rooney’s reply to the second case is to underline the error of equating the frustration of humanoid flourishing with evil. To frustrate any creatures’ attempts to achieve what is “good for them” is not wrong unless it is previously determined that their flourishing is a high-ranking good relative to all other ends. I add that if conflict is possible between humanoid flourishing and other ends, then they must be ranked. That ranking would seem to be a matter of the omnipotent being’s will. If the being wills that humanoids flourish, it could not without contradiction frustrate their flourishing. If however the being determined that conditions leading to the hindrance of humanoid flourishing are a good thing, then it would not be evil to frustrate that flourishing.

What Rooney does not supply is an example of how an omnipotent being could determine the sort of humanoid behavior that leads to humanoid flourishing, yet without also *willing* that flourishing. This may be the most difficult part of the theory to grasp because of its counterintuitive nature. Though he does not refer to Scotus, Rooney’s argument here echoes yet another argument by the schoolman. Scotus, too, believes that the creation of a being does not *necessarily* entail willing that the creature flourish. How could a being determine what it means for some class of things to flourish and yet also will the frustration of those things? I offer two illustrations to show that this is a rational possibility.

A woman plants a grove of pine trees. The “natural good” of a pine tree, at least as we conventionally conceive of it, is maturation and reproduction. Left to the positive processes of its native environment, this good will be the result of the course of the life of each tree in the grove. The woman might have other purposes for the grove, however, that frustrate this end. She wants the trees for firewood, Christmas

trees, or furniture—anything other than the unqualified good of the trees.

There are two problems with this illustration, it might be objected. First, the woman did not *create* pine trees as a species, as the omnipotent being in question is supposed to have done, but simply uses the tree for her own purposes. Second, the omnipotent being of the thought experiment could just as well will that *every* pine tree on the planet be similarly prevented from achieving its natural good. This seems irrational. On what rationale would this being determine a natural good for a class of things and then frustrate that end *without exception*? My second illustration shows how it could be rational to frustrate the natural good or end of a thing without exception.

A man conceives of, designs and builds machines for throwing lacrosse balls. The machines throw balls within a specific range of speeds, distances, and trajectories that simulate the passes and shots of lacrosse offensive players. The man has made the machine to help his daughter, a lacrosse defensive player, develop her defensive stick-handling skills. The “natural good” of the machines is to make good offensive passes and shots. The man’s purpose is to enable his daughter to frustrate those passes and shots, and it is the man’s hope that she frustrate *every* throw, no matter how difficult to stop. If a machine makes flawless throws, but for any reason does not develop the skills of the daughter, the machine cannot be considered as having reached its final end. If my illustration succeeds, it shows how a creator could rationally create something whose purpose or final end opposes its natural end. The natural end places no *a priori* constraints on how each instance reaches its final end.⁵⁹ And if the illustration succeeds, then its application to the ends of a rational entity requires

⁵⁹ The illustration also suggests that it might be misleading to stress classes of things over individual instances of those things. If the final end or purpose is prior to the natural end or purpose in the way that I claim, it is possible to individuate radically each instance of the class. Although I can’t explore the implications here, in the case of human beings, they are of great significance for personal freedom.

only a distinction in the entity's will corresponding to this distinction in ends. This counterintuitive possibility will be examined in chapter 9.

Let's get back to Rooney and his third case. If torture and the pointless infliction of pain *as such* are evil, and evil is defined as what the omnipotent creator wishes to be avoided, then the being could not inflict evil on its animalic and humanoid creatures without inconsistency. Could the pointless infliction of pain or the creation of creatures just to torture for fun *not* involve a contradiction? I don't see how. In conclusion, an omnipotent being that can do evil is not a coherent conception.

Is this argumentation circular? Ultimately, perhaps, but not viciously so. It shows why nothing but goodness can emanate from an omnipotent being when omnipotence includes the determination of morality external to that being. "That something is good carries the implication that in some circumstance it ought to be so; that an action is good implies that in some circumstance it ought to be done.... If goodness is *what ought to be* then omnipotent God must be good; and if goodness is not *what ought to be* then the result is a confusion, and incoherence." (Rooney 1996b, p. 42) It is because of the complete absence of antecedent or conceptual framework, moral or otherwise, that God's will and power cannot be understood as subordinate to divine goodness.

At this point, Thomistic natural lawyers such as MacIntyre should raise a powerful objection concerning the object of practical reasoning. There seems to be fundamental disconnect in the Thomist and Scotist references to human nature and social goods.

Applicability to MacIntyrean natural law

Scotus/Hare are saying that God could have prescribed that we reach our final end of union with God through other means than those dictated by the second table of the Decalogue. (Or more precisely but

weakly, we do not know that God could *not* have prescribed a different route.) Scotus specifically mentions that the prohibition against theft assumes the existence of private property. God might have insisted that we hold all property in common despite our tendency not to treat communal property with as much care as we treat our own. (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 200) Hare imagines the possibility of a celibate society in which sexuality was expressed in ways other than genital sexual intercourse. Say that humans were spontaneously generated as seventeen-year-olds. In such a case, many of the supposed dictates of natural law would be moot. “What I am objecting to is the *deduction* of the ten commandments from our created nature.” And: “The point is that there is no necessary connection between our created natures and the way we reach our final end.” Hare’s theological voluntarism flies in the face of those natural law theories in which “if we know the truths about our nature, the injunctions *follow*.” (2001, pp. 68, 69)

Thomists in the mold of MacIntyre might object that the “nature” in question seems to be our physical make-up and psychological disposition—on MacIntyre’s terms, elements of our nature-as-it-happens-to-be. This is not MacIntyre’s version of natural law, and MacIntyre is indeed following Aquinas here.⁶⁰ MacIntyre, Aquinas, and Aristotle do not argue for the dictates of morality merely from our-nature-as-it-is. Indeed, as we have seen, MacIntyre has given good reasons for thinking that theories that do so inevitably fail. The three-part structure of Aristotelian moral justification argues instead for the necessity of the virtues as the means for moving from our nature-as-it-is to recognized social goods as constitutive of our *nature-as it-ought-to-be*. It is arguing from specific social goods as ends. If we recognize these social goods, MacIntyre says, then we must, as a matter of practical rationality, act and cultivate the moral dispositions necessary to attain them. For example, if we recognize the good of raising

⁶⁰ The three-part structure of Aristotelianism is indeed that of Aquinas. See Rhonheimer 2000, pp. 1-15.

children to take some place in society, then stable homes are necessary, meaning minimal standards of long-term marital fidelity, personal sacrifice, and truth-telling—in short, the Second Table.

By contrast, the objection continues, Hare's Scotist theory envisions other possible ways of reaching our ultimate end, but these other ways entail other goods—hypothetical goods in hypothetical worlds—relative to our nature, as intermediate ends. Scotus' and Hare's hypothetical ends may require different "virtues" as means, but that is because they are such radically different ends. The moral requirements of both sorts of theory are different, but so are their intermediate ends. A hypothetical world of spontaneously-generated seventeen-year-olds may entail something other than the Second Table, but that says nothing to our world. So even if my argument succeeds as a hypothetical, it merely confirms some of the claims of my Part One, though with respect to other worlds. If the goods of child-raising as part of the flourishing of our nature are the social goods of our world, however, then the Hare/Scotist moral theory does not seem capable of scoring points here against the Aristotelian theory. It's not that Scotism wins in a confrontation, but that there seems to be a failure to bring the Scotist and Thomist claims into disagreement with regard to our world. For there to be a confrontation, it must be shown how the claims of theological voluntarism relate to this three-part structure and especially to social goods.

I respond as follows. The point of confrontation is in the Thomist/Aristotelian assumption that the life of flourishing *just is* the good life, such that no distinction between the two is possible, let alone necessary. I have denied this conflation, from the perspective of God's creative and God's legislative freedom. I have argued that from the perspective of creation, the relationship between the two is contingent. We don't know that God could *not* have willed the flourishing of humanoids. Only the demonstration that God's willing against humanoid flourishing is a logical or metaphysical impossibility can justify the assumption that the flourishing life just is

the good life, and therefore that the pursuit of flourishing, as distinct from the good life, just is morality.

As noted, however, God's creative freedom is not the focus of my claims. Setting aside considerations of possible worlds, there is another point of confrontation—divine freedom in divine legislation for *our* world. The binding of Isaac, again, belies the claim of Thomist natural law. In brief, nothing obliges God to direct humans along a straight-line route to flourishing. Explicit reference to God's will is not rationally redundant to the identification of our *telos*.

If not, then it follows that the moral psychology of pursuing flourishing as our ultimate end is not the moral psychology of pursuing the good life for the sake of *the* good as our ultimate end. Before I can outline a structure of morality in the subject corresponding to the objective distinction between the good life and the flourishing life, however, I must explain divine authority better.

A perennial criticism of divine command theory has been that it treats agents like infants rather than adults. (See Nowell-Smith 1967.) In order to refute this objection and to build a bridge to the structure of morality in the subject, I have to show how God is both a theoretical and a practical authority in stipulating the means to our final end.

AUTHORITY IN THEOLOGICAL VOLUNTARISM

Theological voluntarism raises issues concerning divine authority. Since authority concerns both belief and practice, authority can be theoretical or practical or some combination of the two. A theoretical authority is a person whose sincere assertions give others strong reasons for believing the claims asserted, on the basis of the authority's knowledge in the subject area: "Katz thinks that this is a genuine Monet." "Walters says that we would not have a chance of winning a lawsuit." A practical authority is a person whose sincere directives give others reasons to do what the authority demands, on the basis of a right to rule in a particular domain of activity: (Father to son:) "Clean up your room." (Police officer to gawking driver:) "Keep moving." If God's will is determinative in moral obligation, then is divine authority theoretical or practical? If both, then in what is it theoretical, and in what is it practical?

With respect to the moral agent, my theory raises another set of issues as well concerning divine authority. In the obligations that it claims to impose, does theological voluntarism treat the person under authority as a rationally-mature subject? Is my form of theological voluntarism compatible with the direction of one's life according to justice and reason rather than mere coercion or benefit?

The issues here are the identity of the good life and our motivation to attain it. As noted since chapter 2, eudaimonism conflates the flourishing life and the good life. Theological voluntarism denies this conflation. As a result of this disagreement, theistic eudaimonism and theological voluntarism see divine authority differently. Because they see no further distinction necessary to *identifying* human goodness than the goods of human flourishing, eudaimonists of course conclude that explicit reference to divine will is not necessary to *motivate* us to

the human end identified either. In the context of his objection to the moral psychology of John Duns Scotus, MacIntyre says,

Aquinas, like Aristotle, can find no room for any question as to why, given that one recognizes that something is one's true good, one should act so as to achieve it. Neither further reason, nor—for the morally educated, virtue-informed person whose will is rightly ordered by the intellect—further motive, is either necessary or possible. *Hence to know that God commands those precepts of the natural law, in obedience to which one's good is to be realized, gives one no further, additional reason for obedience to those precepts, except insofar as our knowledge of God's unqualified goodness and omniscience gives us reasons—as it does—for holding his judgments of our good, as promulgated in the Old and New Laws, to be superior to our own. The 'ought' of 'One ought to obey God' is the same 'ought' as the 'ought' of 'To do so and so is the good of such a one; so such a one ought to do so and so'—the same 'ought,' that is, as the 'ought' of practical reasoning.* (MacIntyre 1990, p. 154; emphases added)

So on the eudaimonist picture, the expressed will of God adds nothing to moral psychology, and the role of God is, at most, that of the original Promulgator of a necessary natural law in the Divine Mind and of Legal Advisor concerning that necessary law. God's authority is purely theoretical. Were we morally pure and sufficiently informed, unaided practical rationality directed toward our good could tell us all we need to know about moral obligation, and thereby motivate us to comply.

I deny that this is the case. A distinction between the flourishing life and the good life is both possible and necessary. Therefore God's authority is not just theoretical.

MacIntyre (1986) says that theological voluntarism is incapable of providing an account of just authority, based in the sense of justice we have inherent to our flourishing. I argue that beliefs concerning the nature and identity of a purported divine authority are conceptually prior to, and therefore determinative of, the agent's conclusions of right reason concerning the justice of that authority's demands. Reason and belief—practical authority and theoretical authority—come together in theological voluntarism in the following ways. Following G.E.M. Anscombe's role-specific theory of rights, I say that obligations are a source of authority. Authority is the right to rule. In the fulfillment of her/his roles, an agent has a right to do whatever is necessarily entailed by what s/he *must* do. Therefore, an authority has a right to rule to the extent that ruling is necessarily entailed in her or his obligations. In application, practical authorities actualize reasons for others. In directing us to the divine person as highest good, God is fulfilling an obligation to recognize that goodness. I link theoretical and practical authority to show that in actualizing these reasons, divine practical authority does not just coordinate means to ends, it originates those means.

The relationship of practical reason to theoretical reason is one of dependence, in the following respect. Our understanding of "*the good*" shapes, at every level, our understanding of the right. God is uniquely good. Our final end is fixed and necessary, but only by virtue of and with respect to the nature of God as good.

How we realize that good, however, is contingent. The particularities of the route that takes us to our final end, our sub-ultimate ends to that final end, are contingent. So at the level of those subordinate ends, the relationship between theoretical and practical authority is reversed, so

that theoretical authority is dependent on the free decisions of practical authority.

MacIntyre on “just authority”

Alasdair MacIntyre’s objections to theological voluntarism or “Occamist” theories can be found in numerous writings. He addresses these theories specifically in “Which God Ought We to Obey and Why?” (1986)

MacIntyre’s argument stands in opposition to “all those moral theories according to which divine commands provide a standard for right conduct independently of and antecedently to a non-theological knowledge of what justice requires.” (1986, p. 359) His argument is composed of three theses. I am primarily concerned to answer the second thesis, concerning “just authority.”

First, in order to distinguish between the claims to our allegiance set forth in the name of diverse deities, we must have *standards of justice independent of and prior to acknowledging the authority of any set of commands purported to be divine*. Any theory that precludes this possibility will prevent us from distinguishing false gods from the true God. MacIntyre is concerned here to distinguish such caricatures of the divine as Freud’s father projection and Blake’s “Nobodaddy” from the God of the Bible. Freud identifies one possible understanding of justice with the psychological echo of an authoritarian father. On this theory, whatever arbitrary command the father issues to the child, no matter how contrary to justice, is elevated to the status of divine commands.

With relevance to our discussion here, this is the same false god Blake identified as “Nobodaddy,” a god capable of commanding what is commonly known as “theft” or “adultery,” actions its followers must admit they otherwise recognize as unjust. “That is to say, [those followers] are committed to acknowledge that Nobodaddy’s commands could involve the infliction of unmerited harm upon

human beings of a kind incompatible with what some of us now call justice, the justice of desert.” (1986, p. 360)

Jupiter is another pretender to the title of true God. When Aeneas obeys Jupiter’s command to leave Dido for Italy, he nonetheless does so with conflicted emotions and will. “It can on Virgil’s view be right for someone to obey Jupiter and yet also to have justified regrets for so doing.” (1986, p. 362)

MacIntyre sets these deities in contrast to the God of the Bible. The God of Abraham would never command him to do something with a divided mind. The God of Job could never inflict unmerited harm, and when Job rightly calls God to account for his afflictions, it is on the basis of this presupposition that God answers. Yahweh is a god that is just and cannot be otherwise, “just because these are essential attributes....” A standard of justice independent of our knowledge of God’s commands therefore must be established to distinguish God from pretenders. Moral theories of the type advanced by Ockham and other divine command theorists will not be able to evaluate the demands of rival gods.

In response to these objections, I note first that nothing in theological voluntarism precludes the possibility that at least some persons have at least some knowledge of justice prior to specific knowledge of divine commands as divine commands. (See chapters 9 and 10.) In a moment, however, I will deny that one can adopt an understanding of justice independent of beliefs about these gods, and thereby deny that there is a neutral perspective from which to evaluate their demands.

MacIntyre’s second thesis: we should not recognize the legitimacy of any supposedly divine commands without *adequate rational grounds for believing the being to have just authority* over us. Supreme authority would thus require the supreme measure of justice. Any theory that denies that there are adequate rational grounds for such belief in God prevents us from distinguishing authority that is divine

from authority that is merely tyrannical. MacIntyre's concerns here are divine justice and rationality.

MacIntyre emphasizes that only a god commanding with "just authority" can require our obedience. Since "authority" is sometimes ambiguous about the distinction between power and right, his condition that authority be "just" is not redundant here. The issue at hand is the rational superiority of justice over brute coercion, or even promised advantage. We may have reasons to obey a powerful god who issues commands without justice (e.g., fear), or to obey a beneficent god who issues commands without justice (e.g., future benefit), but such commands are not obligatory unless just. Power is only just when wielded for the ends of justice. Divine command theories, he says, lack the notion of just authority. Therefore any account making divine commands foundational to morality, defining justice by fiat, must fail. "[I]t is only insofar as the commands of just authority are themselves just, that is, are in accord with the justice expressed in justly promulgated law, that the utterance of commands imposes any obligation." (1986, p. 364) The essential condition is that the action of commanding, and of enforcing obedience to commands made, and making ultimate decisions be *within the standard of justly promulgated law*.

MacIntyre recognizes God's unrestricted freedom in God's actions toward humans as part of creation, but he sees limitations on what God may rationally legislate for that creation in keeping with human nature. God freely creates human beings and gives them a nature, but since God also promulgates laws relative to that nature, any commands given subsequently must conform to those laws. And it is on the basis of those laws, determined by our nature, that we can judge which god we ought to obey and why. MacIntyre's argument that theological voluntarism requires but lacks a foundation of "just authority" can be summarized as follows:

1. Power over others is “just authority” if and only if it serves the ends of justice.
2. The ends of justice are served if and only if power is exercised in accordance with “duly promulgated law.”
3. Fear or expectation of benefit are not proper reasons for obeying the commands of a deity.
4. The claim “God’s commands are just” in theological voluntarism is only true by tautology.

While MacIntyre’s claims here bring up a number of important issues, notice that they do not form a valid and cogent argument for the conclusion that theological voluntarism must fail as a justification of morality. Such an argument would require the justification of at least two more claims:

5. Theological voluntarism necessarily asserts that either the motivations of fear of punishment, or of expectation of benefit, or both, provide sufficient reasons for obedience to the commands of God.
6. “God’s commands are just” is *not* tautologically true.

MacIntyre demonstrates neither of these. The two modern theorists mentioned in MacIntyre’s essay, Adams and Barth, do not make the claim that fear of punishment and expectation of benefit provide sufficient reasons for obedience. Adams (1981) at one point says that gratitude may motivate obedience, but this is not his justification of the theory. Karl Barth explicitly denies that it is the threat of God’s power that compels our obedience (1957, pp. 552f). As for #6, I will present reasons for concluding that “God’s commands are just” is tautologically true, as it turns out. The relationship is not one of analysis, however, but of reduction. See chapter 10. Meanwhile I say that on the presuppositions of the rival cosmologies MacIntyre cites, we have no basis for supposing that “justice” is other than those cosmologies indicate, for precisely the sorts of reasons he later gives in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988)

The third thesis of MacIntyre's essay is that divine command theories cannot make the necessary distinctions to identify just authority because of a presuppositional deficiency. They are blind to the *historically and analogically ordered character of concepts such as goodness, justice and the divine.* (1986, p. 370-371) The concepts of justice, goodness, and the divine form "one single complex history." (1986, p. 367) He is situating the discussion in the context of the transition from Jupiter/Zeus to the Unmoved Mover to Yahweh. Or more precisely, from Virgil to Aristotle to Aquinas.

The problem before the person in such a transition is how to apply the standards of justice, goodness, and the divine from one to the next, MacIntyre says. Say a person rejects the Unmoved Mover in favor of Yahweh, using standards of justice. In what ways do those standards apply to Yahweh? In what ways are they inappropriate? We can apply human standards with respect to Yahweh's covenants and promises, for example, but not to God's person as lawgiver and judge. We can only learn about God as creator from the scriptures and from rational reflection on our own natures. (1986, p. 368)

What we learn is that the standards we use with respect to God and ourselves have the force of law, MacIntyre continues, and that it is God who promulgates these laws through human rationality. We follow two lines of argument in arriving at this conclusion. In the first, we ask how the standards of justice constituting the life of our particular community might be reformulated as standards for *any* communal activity for pursuing the good and the best. In the second, we criticize the original conception of the good life (consisting at first in the life of the political virtues supplemented by contemplation of the Unmoved Mover) and we move to a conception of the good life consisting in rational friendship and therefore ultimately in friendship with God. In moving from Aristotle to Aquinas, as it were, we modify our understanding of that life as the good and the best and reject some of that understanding. "But we also learn that part of what we took to be true is indeed true and that the justice in terms of which we judged

God's claims, in order to distinguish them from those of Jupiter and Nobodaddy, is a justice which is commanded by God Himself." (1986, p. 369) We can come to Yahweh and see that this God is just, as we understand justice, as well as that God is just in ways that modify our understanding of justice. Some concepts can be applied analogically from the human to the divine. In the story of Job, for example, says MacIntyre, both God and Job's self-styled comforters presuppose that God cannot and has not inflicted unmerited harm upon Job. (1986, pp. 360f.)

Barth therefore puts himself in a contradictory and untenable situation, MacIntyre says, when he (1) claims that apart from God's self-revelation we have no concepts justly applicable to God, and then goes on to say (2) that God can reveal the divine nature to us in those same concepts. The standard by which we judge God is itself a work of God. "God, it turns out, cannot be truly judged of by something external to his Word, but that is because natural justice recognized by natural reason is itself divinely uttered and authorized." (1986, p. 370)

My primary concern here is to reply to the issue of "just authority" in theological voluntarism. To address this question, however, I have to call into question the other two theses. I think that these two stand in tension in a way that MacIntyre fails to recognize. The first invokes standards of justice independent of divine authority that can be used to evaluate that authority. The third insists on the historically and analogically ordered nature of concepts such as goodness, justice, and the divine. Any perspective from which we can analyze the ultimate ends of justice, it seems to me, pits the third thesis against the first thesis. That is, our historically-informed concepts of justice, goodness, and the divine provide us with the perspective from which we evaluate divine commands. But precisely *because* our concepts of justice, goodness, and the divine are historically and analogically ordered, those standards of justice are not *independent of* and *prior to* the authority of divine commands in the way that he implies. Let's see why this is the case.

Belief and justice

If the good is only obedience, MacIntyre says, then we do not have a notion of goodness whereby we can justify obedience to one god over another. Our decision concerning which God to obey should not be separated from the question of the attributes necessary of a god worthy of obedience, as he believes theological voluntarists have done. Without the distinctions in these attributes, “Nobodaddy, Jupiter, Satan, and God all compete for our allegiance on equal terms—apart, that is, from inequalities in their power.” (1986, p. 365)

I deny MacIntyre’s claim. The deities in this list cannot be conceived of as competing equally for our allegiance other than in power. Even prior to explicit reference to attributes supposedly making a deity worthy of obedience, the differences relative to divine power connote whole theoretical systems. Those systems do not have common conceptual terms of reference. To say that Jupiter and Satan compete for our allegiance is not to compare apples and oranges, but to compare ambrosia and the Eucharist, or ambrosia and blood as it is used in a Black Mass. We can look to MacIntyre himself and the powerful arguments of *Whose Justice?* (1988, p. 350) for reasons to think that any conclusion of practical rationality is inextricably interdependent on the conception of justice associated with that theory of practical rationality. The question here concerns just such conclusions and their relationship to their respective conceptions of justice. The content of the agent’s personal belief concerning a given deity in its contextual cosmology is prior to the question of obedience to the commands of that divinity. And by extension, as my arguments in Part One show, the shape of the *virtues*—courage, honesty, and now justice—will follow necessarily on the respective conception of the good in a given theory, as a matter of practical rationality.

The proponents of theological voluntarism, as such, all *do* presuppose some conception of God that includes all the attributes MacIntyre sees as necessary. I am not aware of any theological voluntarist arguing that any other divinity than an all-powerful creator is to be obeyed,

and most are referring to the God of the biblical narratives. Theological voluntarists often do not set down the essential attributes of the God to be obeyed because the identity of this deity is not in question. If they do not do so antecedently to their theory, it is also in part because to do so would effectively concede part of their argument. To affirm that “God is good” or “God is just” *seems* to imply a standard of goodness independent of God’s nature by which we can judge the goodness of God. And MacIntyre actually concurs, in the final analysis. It turns out “that the justice in terms of which we judged God’s claims, in order to distinguish them from those of Jupiter and Nobodaddy, is a justice which is commanded by God Himself.”⁶¹ My objection is that this claim presupposes the existence of the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” in presupposing goods and standards of justice that are derived from that biblical conception. I have no problem with the presupposition. I have a big problem with MacIntyre’s implication that his conclusions concerning the justice of purported divine commands do not depend on this presupposition.

We cannot ask what it means to obey a divinity in the abstract, for the belief in a given being already carries with it a number of presuppositions and commitments that are incompatible with belief in a different deity. The belief in question will not only be belief about the qualities of the divinity but also about the entire cosmology surrounding such a divinity. Here’s what a divine command theory might look like relative to beings other than God.

It might initially appear to make sense to ask in the abstract whether we should obey Satan, for example. In practice, however, it does not. If we do not believe in the existence of Satan, the question is answered. If we do believe in the existence of Satan, then the question is also answered, on any of several rival accounts. As the concept of

⁶¹ MacIntyre is using “commanded” metaphorically here. He means the “dictates” of practical reason to be used as criteria of evaluation of literal commands. But as Hittinger points out, natural law cannot be considered as law *except* metaphorically without reference to a lawgiver. (1994)

Satan appears in the biblical and then koranic contexts, it is never reasonable to obey Satan. Only on a radical reinterpretation of those understandings could it be reasonable. This reinterpretation might evoke Satan either as symbolic of a cosmological survival-of-the-fittest, or as the dark side of a Manichean struggle, or a figure in some other view. A Satanist does not ask whether Satan's commands are just, unless ironically. Non-Satanist conceptions of justice are not tenable to Satanists. To admit justice as a concept would be to undermine their own position. Even Milton's Lucifer, attempting to redefine evil as his good, condemns himself in the instant he names God's good and *reacts* rather than creates. In any case, theistic or not, to situate Satan in a conceptual scheme is to imply reasons for obeying him or not. If the world really is what a believer in Satan—ancient, medieval, or modern—believes it to be, then the question is already answered.

Similarly, if a believer in Jupiter believes himself to be commanded by that deity, he obeys or suffers the consequences. But on what coherent conceptual scheme could he simultaneously endorse belief in Jupiter *and* in a non-Olympian justice? To believe in the latter is to begin to disbelieve in the former. Virgil may be sowing doubts in the reader's mind concerning the acceptability of the Olympian conception by validating Aeneas's regrets as justified. Or perhaps he is showing that such regrets are fully compatible with heroic justice and unavoidable tragedy, yet is not casting doubt on the rightness of Jupiter's command. I do not think that he can coherently do both.

So also, if a theist in the biblical tradition believes she has an authentic command from God, then the question of whether she should obey that command is already answered. To ask if the command is just is either to question that the command is in fact a genuine command, or to question that it comes from God. She cannot coherently both acknowledge that the Almighty Creator God of any orthodox understanding has commanded her to do something and also explain

why that command is unjust.⁶² Nor, I say, can she coherently explain the justice of this God's commands without acknowledging the uniqueness of this God's creative and legislative freedom.

In comparing gods and the justice of their commands, MacIntyre's exception—"apart, that is, from inequalities in their power"—is of immense importance. The biblical God is not simply more powerful than any existent or non-existent rivals. If this form of theism is correct, God is *all*-powerful and this has consequences for the ends of justice. Even more importantly, God is Creator creating *ex nihilo*, in distinction from those rivals in MacIntyre's argument.⁶³ The initial creative activity in the divine mind is not constrained by the medium in which God is working, there being no medium prior to that creative activity. God is not antecedently limited by any natural laws, either of the type consequently associated with the natural sciences (excepting of course those of logical necessity) or of the type linking practical rationality to goods, there being no antecedent good other than the divine goodness. So I argued in the last chapter.

I will only add here that God's reproach of Job is not based in Job's prior understanding of justice, nor even in the justice-as-desert presumed by his detractors, whom God reproaches even more severely. In the end, God's explanation is that Job is in no position to judge because he was not present at the creation. I take this to mean

⁶² MacIntyre names two other deities in his essay: the Unmoved Mover and Nobodaddy. Blake's Nobodaddy is not intended to imply a conceptual scheme, but is just a pejorative caricature. To recognize that a purported conception of a divinity is, in effect, "Nobodaddy" is to deny its existence. It is to point out the incoherence of such a conception and to deny the validity of the commands supposedly issuing from such a being. The Unmoved Mover does not issue commands, nor does it even interact with human beings. Nevertheless, both figures illustrate my larger point. To name a divine entity and the context it entails *and* what it means to believe in that divine entity is to have implied an answer about whether it should be obeyed. (See Rooney's related comments on Christian theistic theological voluntarism. (1996, pp. 15-21))

⁶³ Though a standard theological term, *ex nihilo* has increasingly been recognized to be inadequate, since it conveys that something came from nothing. The important notion is that God was not working with pre-existent or eternal matter, as all non-biblical creation mythologies have their deities doing.

that because Job was not present at the creation, he did not and could not know God's ultimate purposes in creation generally and in allowing what Job suffered in particular.

How then would someone make a transition of the sort mentioned by MacIntyre, from Jupiter or the Unmoved Mover or the central entity of any conceptual scheme, to obedience to God, or the reverse? The question is beyond the scope of this thesis. What I can do here is reaffirm MacIntyre's denial in other contexts that we can argue from outside the presuppositions of our conception. (See especially MacIntyre 1998.)

As noted already, MacIntyre avers that in moving from the Unmoved Mover to Yahweh (or Aristotle to Aquinas) we modify our understanding of the good life and reject some of that understanding, but contends that we also see that "*part* of what we took to be true is indeed true and that the justice in terms of which we judged God's claims, in order to distinguish them from those of Jupiter and Nobodaddy, is a justice which is commanded by God Himself." (1986, p. 369; emphasis added)

So I ask, which part of what we previously believed about the claims of justice do we still find to be true? And judging by which reasons or rationality do we perceive that that part is true? Isn't it only in retrospect, and from the perspective of the new paradigm, that we can determine both the points of validity and the limitations of the old paradigm? The difference between the conception of justice of the average Yahweh-believer prior to belief and her subsequent conception of justice on a thoroughgoing biblical foundation is radical, as MacIntyre recognizes elsewhere. (1988, pp. 192f) Her prior concepts may give her access to the subject of conversation, but they are thereafter decisively reoriented and changed. MacIntyre acknowledges that we come to see God's justice as different in important ways from our prior understanding. I contend that once that shift is made, our conception of justice itself changes. Unless we can

antecedently know God's purposes—and I deny that we can know such purposes antecedently—it will not do to take any human good as an absolute standard of justice by which to judge the commands of *this* God, as the story of Job shows.

Belief and justice are thus inextricably linked. What is true and what is right, that is, are inextricably linked. By extension, theoretical and practical authority are inextricably linked. The relationship of dependence, however, corresponds to what is necessarily true and what is contingently true, what is necessarily right and what is contingently right.

Authority, practical and theoretical

Theological eudaimonism emphasizes God's theoretical authority: God's commands reiterate reasons that we already have. Theological voluntarism gives a relatively greater role to God's practical authority. In order to defend my theory, then, I must show what practical authority entails, how it relates to theoretical authority, and how both apply to theological voluntarism. What is practical authority?

A practical authority, I say, is *a person or entity whose communicated intentions actualize decisive reasons for another's action in the realization of the authority's role.*⁶⁴

Most theories of theological voluntarism have been presented as divine *command* theory. (Adams 1981; Mouw 1990; Rooney 1996b) This identification of obligation with divine commands is inadequate. While it captures one part of human obligation with respect to God's will, it misses others, such as the obligations inherent in reciprocal love. More importantly for the present discussion, a practical authority is an entity that can actualize reasons for action *through* commands. It

⁶⁴ We could also say that a person *has* practical authority if her communicated decisions actualize decisive reasons for another's actions in the realization of her role. As will become obvious, this definition owes much to Anscombe (1990) and Murphy (2002a), though it is radically different from the theories of both.

is not the command itself that is the locus of obligation. If we look more closely at commands, we can see why not.

First, commands may be non-verbal. Picture the field marshal sending a field of soldiers into battle with a wave of the arm. Second, a practical authority may make utterances in the *form* of verbal commands—jokingly, say—that are not meant to be taken at face value. And, third, a genuine practical authority is rightly affronted when a subordinate follows the letter of a command, rather than what the subordinate knows is the *intent* behind the command.

From these observations we can infer that it is not, strictly speaking, the command itself that constitutes a reason for action. A command communicates to the commanded an *intention*. In so doing, the command itself gives *a reason to believe that there is a reason* for action. The reason takes shape something like this in the mind of the commanded: “The authority did/said such-and-such. I interpret this to mean that she intends for me to do thus-and-so.” It is the intention being communicated by the command that the person under authority discerns.

Let’s look at an example. Suppose that a traffic officer has genuine practical authority in the safe and efficient conduct of transportation vehicles. In case of traffic accidents, this authority extends to the impromptu ordering of traffic flow. Suppose also that at the scene of an accident there are at least two equally adequate, contrary routes that are possible detours around the accident. Her authority then extends to the choice between those routes. Let’s say that she chooses the southern route. Using hand signals she then directs drivers that enter into her domain to follow that route.

A genuine practical authority, by her decision, chooses a *route-candidate* and thereby originates a route. A *route-candidate* is a possible state of affairs, such that if it obtained, then it would be a possible means to an end. Conjoined with a route-candidate, her

communicated intention as practical authority is the only element that is lacking in order to originate an actual route. A route is not a route, but only a route-candidate or possible route, unless the practical authority actualizes it. Once she originates a route to an end or good, there is a morally right route, the one actualized. In the example, it is the southern route. Any other route is wrong, and it is morally wrong for someone under her authority to take it, especially with full knowledge of her decision.⁶⁵ This obligation did not exist before her decision.

A practical authority first forms an intention within the range of her domain of authority, then issues a command or otherwise communicates that intention. Even if the command is issued by the same entity that formed the intention, and even if the entity has formed the intention immediately prior to giving the command, the command and the intention are distinct.

As a result of this distinction, we can see that the difference between theoretical and practical authority concerning a particular instance of obligation does not always entail a difference in commanding persons or entities. The same person, that is, may be both a theoretical authority and a practical authority with respect to the same command. Suppose, for example, that a driver asks the traffic officer described above about which route to take. She answers the driver's question. Is she a practical or a theoretical authority? Obviously both. If she tells the driver that the southern route is the right route, she is acting as a theoretical authority, although on the basis of her own decision as practical authority. But this example is different from the original example only in the time elapsed between when she first made the decision and when she gave the two commands. Both in the original command and later on, the command informs the commanded of the

⁶⁵ If the rational being is not *under* the practical authority of another, but *has* practical authority in a particular domain, then it is his intention that actualizes the route as means. This would be the case, for example, if the traffic officer communicated her intention that which of the *route-candidates* would be the route actualized was left to the intention of each driver.

obligation inherent in the intention of the authority. A theoretical authority may not be a practical authority, but a practical authority is always, in the following respect, a theoretical authority.

The command *informs* the commanded of an obligation by giving a directive. It is easy to see how this informing takes place with regard to purely theoretical authority for morality. A theoretical authority informs someone under her authority of reasons he already has (though is not usually cognizant of). (“Stop! The light is red.” [Implied: “And as you should know, running a red light is illegal and dangerous.”]) Commands reflecting a pre-existing order of reasons exemplify theoretical authority, not practical authority. (Raz 1986, pp. 28-31, cited in Murphy 2002a, p. 15) The command of a practical authority *also*, however, informs the commanded of an obligation. The obligation does *not* exist prior to the decision of the practical authority, but it does exist prior to the command. It is in this sense that a practical authority is always also a theoretical authority, whether concerning obligations reflecting a pre-existing order of reasons, or concerning the intention s/he has formed as a practical authority, and whether the intention she has formed is immediately prior to the command, or some time before the command.

In cases like that of the inquiring driver, the person commanded may not know that the authority informing him of the right route to take is also the practical authority that has designated that route as the right one. She may not tell him, for example. He might mistakenly think that she is only a theoretical authority. If we were focusing only on commands rather than intentions, as do Raz and Murphy, we might miss this point. By distinguishing the command of a practical authority from the practical authority’s freely formed intention that actually constitutes the reason to act, we see that the practical authority may sometimes appear to be merely theoretical.

Now although she is a theoretical authority concerning her own decisions of practical authority, those decisions are subordinate to one

or more instances of authority concerning which any commands she gives can *only* be theoretical. Our traffic officer has authority to choose the route around the accident. In the situation described she does not have authority to direct drivers along a route that sends them off the end of a pier. Pre-existing goods limit her authority. As we will see in a moment, the goods protected and attained by her role as a traffic officer determine the extent of her authority. Before going there, notice the relationship between the ranking of goods and the priority of theoretical and practical authority. In our example, the practical authority sequentially comes first, followed by the theoretical authority. The officer decides on the route, and then she advises drivers of this decision. But this sequence could be misinterpreted.

Since practical authority controls, at some level, reasons for action, it also controls goods, at a lower level. A practical authority designates or creates a *means* to goods, and thereby actually *creates* lesser-ranked, “for-the-sake-of” goods. In specifying which is to be the right route around the accident, continuing the example, the traffic officer also originates the good of following that particular route. This good (the southern route) is for the sake of a greater good (let’s say that it’s safe and efficient transportation). The greater the authority she has, the greater or higher-ranking the goods she controls. The lesser the authority, the smaller or lower the order of goods controlled.

Within a given domain of authority and in a given instance, the for-the-sake-of goods possible to practical authorities without overruling the original decision become lower and lower in rank. A second traffic officer, coming to the scene of the accident after the first, learning of the first’s decision, and seeing the need for a detour from the other direction of the road on which the accident has taken place, may decide to send eastbound traffic along the *northern* route in concert with the first decision. But he cannot, without overruling the prior decision of the first officer on the scene, designate a different route than the one she designated as the right one. One instance of practical authority builds on another, but must recognize those preceding it. We

could multiply the examples indefinitely for an indefinite number of authorities working in coordination, each decision contingent on those preceding it.

Viewing this structure from the opposite direction, obligation and its explanation always look toward a larger frame of reference, to a larger, for-the-sake-of good. The right is derived from the good. The contingent always derives, ultimately, from the necessary. At what level are goods and their corresponding obligations contingent, and at what level are they necessary?

Goods in relation to which they can only be a theoretical authority will always limit the traffic officers' practical authority. They will always be, first, theoretical authorities concerning greater goods and their decisions of practical authority must recognize those goods in order to be genuine. Each decision of genuine practical authority must recognize existing goods, including for-the-sake-of goods created by previous decisions. What-is-the-case at any point determines what constitutes right assertions for theoretical authority. Existent goods determine what are right actions. Both theoretical and practical authority have a "debt" to what-is-the-case, in the same way as the virtues are necessary to attain goods. In fact, the two are not parallel kinds of relationship, but are two ways of describing the same structure. (See the section on Anselm in chapter 5.) A theoretical authority's intellectual excellences are required to realize the goods of communicating what-is-the-case. Those excellences are understood in function of communicating what exists. And as we have seen in Part One, some semblance of justice, truthfulness, and courage are required to attain internal goods, and these dispositions to action are defined in terms of those goods.

In conclusion, in order to fulfill its role in signifying rightly, a theoretical authority must rightly communicate *what-is-the-case* to those under that theoretical authority, so that their thought can rightly conform to what-is-the-case, as does the thought of the theoretical

authority. Practical authority must rightly originate a *course of action* as a good for the sake of a greater good, a greater good that is the case, so that those under that practical authority can cooperatively and rightly act in order to realize that greater good. Practical authority, concerning right action, is only legitimate to the extent that it rightly designates a right route to that good, a genuinely existent good. These are their roles as theoretical and practical authorities. It is in understanding the fulfillment of roles that we can complete this sketch of authority.

Authority, roles, and ends

Before asking whether such authority is actually recognized, and how it is recognized, let's look at another question. Specifically, setting aside for a moment the controversial question of consent and where it is required, consider the rational basis for practical authority in those relationships not instituted by explicit contract or convention. What justification might we find for the authority of parents and governments, for example? "Stop bossing your little brother around and do what I told you to do 30 minutes ago." What is the moral difference, if any, between these two attempts to rule? The same question arises about the difference between the state and a crime syndicate. What gives the state the right to rule, but not the mafia?

G.E.M. Anscombe has made important comments in locating the source of authority in such relationships. Anscombe explains the concept of a right by reference to modals. Expanding on Aristotle, she notes that one sense of "necessary" is *that without which some good will not be obtained or some evil averted*. "If someone has a role or function which he 'must' perform, or anything that he 'has' to do, then you 'cannot' impede him." If a person's role requires that she do something, then she has a right to do that thing unhindered. A person has a *right* to do, that is, whatever is logically entailed in what she *must* do. Authority is the *right* to rule in some domain. Authority derives from the *necessary* fulfillment of a role.

A parent must raise a child, for example, and cannot do so without obedience. She has the right to obedience, within the limits of the role, in the fulfillment of that role. A government must protect its citizens from at least some harms, suppose. It then has the right to compliance, within the limits of its role, in the fulfillment of that role. Within limits imposed by her function and those of others, a traffic officer can establish rules to direct drivers in her role in attaining public safety: “There’s an accident up ahead. Make a detour onto Broad Street for at least two blocks to go around it.” Her authority follows on her legitimate tasks. As Anscombe notes, these tasks are either the tasks that she alone must do, or those tasks for whom she shares responsibility for accomplishing with others, and therefore *may* do. (Anscombe 1990)

Every rational being, it follows, has practical authority within the scope of its legitimate roles. Any rational being has the role of conducting her/himself toward her/his proper end, at least, and can therefore issue directives within that functioning. Even children have some responsibility for their own well-being, including their physical well-being.⁶⁶ So a child can issue commands that constitute reasons for action within that domain: “Billy, stop it! That hurts!” “Mommy, please pass the potatoes. (I need more to eat.)” Those with greater practical authority have a greater scope of tasks and responsibilities.

All that remains to be explained on this account of authority, before applying it to my theory of theological voluntarism, is the actualization of decisive reasons.

Authority and the actualization of reasons

The actualization of reasons is best understood through the concept of what Mark Murphy calls *reason-candidates*. A reason-candidate is a possible state of affairs, such that if it obtained, then it would be a

⁶⁶ This supposes, as I believe to be the case, contingently, that human flourishing at least partly constitutes the human end.

reason for a rational being to do something. (Murphy 2002a, p. 11)
The intention that the practical authority communicates is the only element in the realization of a reason-candidate that is lacking in order to make it a complete reason. A practical authority's communicated intention actualizes a reason-candidate for another rational being in the relevant domain.

That reason is a *decisive* reason for action if it is a reason all-things-considered. An apparently decisive reason in one domain can be defeated by reasons stemming from a domain encompassing it. (Murphy 2002a, pp. 14f) A decisive reason actualized by the legislative authority of the state of Massachusetts, for example, can be defeated by reasons actualized by the federal government of the United States.

Murphy (2002a, p. 11) tries to distinguish between *causing* reasons and *constituting* reasons as a mark of genuine practical authority. A bully's instructions to her victim to do something, backed by threats of violence, he says, are causal but not constitutive. This distinction is unsatisfactory. As John Hare notes, the victim has reason-candidates in avoiding pain by complying with the bully's demands, reason-candidates that are constitutively actualized by the bully's commands. (Hare 2004, p. 376) If the bully has accurately assessed her victim's practical rationality in avoiding pain, the reasons will be decisive.

It is not because the bully's directives do not constitute reasons that the bully's actions are wrong, but at least in part because the bully is acting outside her proper role. There are reason-candidates that she may legitimately actualize in the course of realizing her legitimate roles and functions. In acting as a bully, she actualizes reason-candidates that are outside the fulfillment of those functions. Thus she is actualizing reasons that her victim should not have. A bully's commands do not actualize reasons that positively advance the realization of the good for her victim. Rather, her commands actualize reason-candidates that detract from the realization of the good. A

bully is someone who constitutively actualizes reasons *unjustly*. A Mafioso or other form of bully demands unnecessary sacrifices of goods. She counts on the victim's right ordering of goods while she realizes external or lesser-order goods. She benefits parasitically from his proper ranking of goods, and this parasitic relationship is wrong.⁶⁷ She forces her victim, for example, to choose between the losses of money or of physical flourishing. As a result, social contexts strongly influenced by bullies are inevitably impoverished at many levels.

The just practical authority, too, counts on a normal ordering of goods, but does so for the sake of realizing internal or higher-order goods. She actualizes only those reason-candidates that contribute to the realization of some good state of affairs, all-things-considered. The realization of such reason-candidates is part of the practical authority's role/function in the realization of the good.

How does all this apply to my theory?

Divine authority, practical and theoretical

Theistic eudaimonism emphasizes the theoretical authority of divine commands. With respect to injunctions such as those of the Decalogue, God is advising created rational beings there concerning how to realize the good of flourishing. With respect to subordinate obligations, God may arbitrarily specify any of several equally satisfactory options in the realization of that end, for the purpose of expertly coordinating human actions. But on the eudaimonist claim, God exercises practical authority only to actualize reasons that lead more or less directly to the common good of human flourishing as the known final end of human nature. What I want to emphasize once again, to the contrary, is the importance of looking beyond the anthropocentric ends of human life to a function that transcends those

⁶⁷ For reasons that I gave in chapter 6, the realization of flourishing for one class of beings at the detriment of another class of beings is not *necessarily* an indication of an improper ordering of goods.

ends. As a result, the scope of divine practical authority is much broader than the eudaimonist claim recognizes.

Recall Anselm's theory of doing the truth. (See chapter 5.) It anticipates Scotus' understanding of primary and secondary goodness in the context of practical and theoretical authority. The upshot of that theory is that there are two senses in which a statement or an action can be true, one natural and necessary, one accidental/contingent. A sentence is "true" naturally and by necessity if it is whole or complete, has proper syntax, and diction. If these conditions are met, it accomplishes its function, considered narrowly. A sentence is "true" in this sense if it is syntactically correct and communicates what it is intended to communicate. It is true in the more common usage, accidentally/contingently, if it communicates rightly what is the case, if it is used in a right way. The same is true of human action, as I followed Anselm in claiming in chapter 5.

Any supposed limitation on divine practical authority based on human flourishing takes too narrow a frame of reference. It rightly acknowledges what Anselm and later Scotus refer to as the natural/necessary truth or goodness of objects, but overlooks the accidental/contingent truth or goodness of the use to which the object (the human species) is put. The error concerning divine authority resides in seeing human flourishing as a freestanding, eternally necessary truth, rather than as dependent on divine intentions.

Nevertheless, my understanding of God's creative freedom does not preclude *all* constraints on the rectitude of the signification of "what is the case." God's own existence is conceptually prior to any intention God has for created beings. Therefore God *must* signify what is the case concerning God's own nature, specifically God's goodness. Likewise, God as artificer must acknowledge the goodness of this nature in what God creates. God must also require all other entities, rational and non-rational, to stand in proper relation to this superlative nature. For all rational beings, the recognition of the truth of God's

nature as a good incontestably superior to all other goods follows necessarily on any knowledge of the divine nature. With respect to that ultimate end and good and truth, God can only be a theoretical authority.

What the recognition of this end by rational creatures entails, however, is contingent on God's practical authority and freedom to establish the ground rules of the relationship between artificer and art. At any rate, we do not know that God could *not* have chosen another means of realizing our final end for rational humanoids with many of the same capacities that we have. In the role of practical authority in God's domain—everything external to God—God's communicated intention actualizes a route-candidate for a human being. It is in this sense that God originates or creates a route to God. God has chosen our flourishing, a flourishing that surpasses any flourishing that can be realized by unaided human potential. The actualization of human nature, viewed from the end contingently intended by God, represents the full realization of the *imago dei*, the Incarnation, Resurrection and Glorification of Christ by the gracious intervention of God. It is flourishing of the person holistically—body, will, emotions, sociality, and intellect.

What the realization of *this* end—flourishing of a very particular sort—entails and *how* it is realized is also contingent on God's practical authority and freedom. Having actualized that route-candidate, there are self-imposed limits that God will necessarily respect in any decision concerning ends subordinate to that end. And those limits increase with each additional sub-route actualized as a for-the-sake-of good to our final end. Under normal subsequent relations and circumstances of authority, divine theoretical authority is reflective of these decisions of divine practical authority. On an account of orthodox theological voluntarism, for example, human biological flourishing is a good contingently and arbitrarily occupying a very high order in God's intentions. Because human biological flourishing requires at least minimal conditions of sanitation, God

might dictate such conditions of sanitation, for example, for the purpose of realizing biological flourishing. God may counsel human beings as to how to attain such high-ranking goods in matters where rationality tends to fail, due to the distortion caused by human self-directedness.

So divine authority over human life is both practical and theoretical, in that God arbitrarily chooses the means to our end as co-lovers of God and then communicates that chosen end. In the theistic traditions, God's roles and relationship to everything else are those of creator, ruler, legislator, judge, benefactor, and caretaker. If the argument I offered in the previous chapter is correct, then God is free to dictate to humans any logically possible means by which to pursue this relationship. And we don't know that other means than the one actualized, the one we know to be in harmony with empirically observable flourishing, is not possible. The example of Abraham and Isaac, again, seems to confirm this possibility. Among logically possible options that realize humanoid flourishing, whatever that turns out to be, there will be no reason for God to choose one route-candidate over another in order to actualize a route. And any reason why a *human* might prefer one to the others will be decisively overridden by its incompatibility with achieving the good of a right relationship with God by the means actualized.

Given this understanding of divine authority, I now have to consider the greatest objections that it might face.

Divine authority and objections to salient coordination

There are important objections to the salient coordination argument for practical authority and my account might seem to fall subject to them. (See Murphy 2002a, pp. 120ff.) According to the usual formulation of the salient coordination argument, the practical authority of the state derives from the necessity of coordination of its citizens' actions. If some social end is best realized through

cooperation and coordination among citizens, and there are several equally acceptable, but incompatible forms of cooperation possible, a decision between the forms is necessary. Given the existence of a salient person or set of rules offering a decision concerning how the citizens are to act in view of the realization of their end, it would be irrational for citizens to pursue their end without regard to that decision. The state, it is claimed, is the salient institution for such coordination. If the end is mandatory, then the argument is strengthened. In the classic example, the end is that automobile drivers all drive on one side or the other of a given road. Assuming that neither a mandate to drive on the right nor one to drive on the left presents an appreciable difference in the realization of that end, it would be unreasonable for the drivers to disregard the decision of the salient coordinator.

One huge problem for the coordination argument of political authority is that the means of reaching a given end are almost never arbitrary. The conditions of salient coordination do not apply because the means to the end are materially different. Even in the standard example of driving on one side of the road or the other, it could turn out that it is slightly easier for right-handed people (i.e. the vast majority of people) to *steer* standard steering wheels to the right side of the dividing line, or slightly more difficult for right-eye dominant people (again, the vast majority) to *see* where the dividing line is. So maybe there *is* an appreciable difference between the two. On many purported instances of coordination the material differences between courses of action are much greater. So reasons can be presented against any decision the would-be authority might make. Thus the coordination argument can in *principle* generate authority, but is in *practice* almost never indisputable. The means to any good are almost never arbitrary, and there is at least a *prima facie* case that the means to *the* common good are not arbitrary.

The problem for a theistic account of divine authority is quite different than for that of a political authority. The objection does not apply to

the sort of theory I am advancing, since divine wisdom will not be stymied by deliberation and discovery of the most reasonable means to an end. Being omniscient, God knows the best way. But this raises another problem. *Because* means are rarely arbitrary, don't God's commands then merely constitute *theoretical* authority, rather than practical authority?

Mark Murphy (2002a, p. 125f) raises a second objection, that even if God is the best candidate for salient coordinator, the *need* for the coordination of an authority does not entail the *existence* of authority. The need for an authoritative salient coordinator does not place us under that coordinator's authority. Just because humans need coordination it does not follow that we are under authority and therefore morally required to follow the dictates of a salient coordinator. We need an *additional reason to put ourselves under* the authority of that coordinator. Such reasons exist, Murphy says, but until they are recognized and acted upon, it is not that all created rational beings *are* under divine authority, he says, but that all created rational beings *ought* to be under divine authority. (See also Murphy 2001, pp. 79-83.)

What is the importance of this difficult distinction? "The point is that created rational beings can see that it would be *good* to have certain reasons for action without thereby *having* those reasons." Murphy illustrates this point as follows. Imagine a situation in which a friend for whom you are responsible is sick and in need of a medicine certain to remedy the causes of his suffering. A pharmacist will give you the drug only on condition that you are obligated to pay her twenty dollars within a week. It would be good for you to have this reason to pay her the twenty dollars. Your friend's health is at stake. Its being good to have this reason, however, does not yet quite give you the reason to pay the twenty dollars within the week. You need to do something more, such as make a promise, in order to generate a reason. Its being good to have a reason does not in itself give us a reason. All created rational beings, he says, are bound by reason to make God

authoritative over them through consent, but they are not under God's authority until each does so.

So the assertion of divine authority over human beings seems to face a dilemma concerning the means to the human end. Either that authority consists in the choice of the best non-arbitrary option, and is therefore actually theoretical rather than practical authority, or it chooses between arbitrary options, but is not practical authority *until* humans consent to place themselves under that authority.

Both objections miss the mark. My reply to the first objection is that because the ultimate human end is not flourishing as such but rather God, the actualization of the route *is* arbitrary. The claim that divine authority is merely theoretical, based on an analogy with the coordination theory of *political* authority, breaks down just at the point of their commonality. Both the salient coordinator theory of political authority and Murphy's adaptation of it to form a coordination theory of divine authority presuppose human ends, based in the common good or human flourishing, as ultimate. They therefore presuppose the existence of decisive reasons for preferring the one of several routes, none of which is worse than any others. This is a fair criticism of political authority based in antecedent conceptions of the good/best as human flourishing. It would be a fair criticism of divine practical authority if God were constrained by the good of human flourishing. But God is not so constrained. Within the broadly logical limits of the supreme good of the divine nature, there *is* no route to unity with God that is not entirely and arbitrarily actualized by God. God arbitrarily actualizes any of multiple logically possible routes. If humans have the capacity to will that end over their own good and so can rationally choose according to God's actualized route, as I will argue in the next chapter, then God *is* a practical authority over these questions. God is practically authoritative over a created rational being with respect to following the route so specified because the communicated divine intention that a created rational being follow that route constitutively actualizes both the route and also thereby a

reason for that being to follow that route. The reason-candidate that is actualized in God's intention is that following that route, and only following that route, leads to union with God. The reasons for taking whatever route will unite us with God are decisively stronger than those for achieving any other good.

In reply to the second objection, Murphy's argument for consent may get traction against the argument from salient coordination for political practical authority, if it can be shown that the specification of our means (from among several equally adequate but incompatible means) to the common good could be reached without the role/function of the state.⁶⁸ This is not the case in divine practical authority. Divine practical authority is not a matter of coordination, but of origination. As a practical authority, God creates a good in actualizing a route that did not previously exist at all. There is no route at all until God actualizes one.

Murphy does not specify the concept of the common good. Nor does he provide anything that would deflect the sorts of criticisms of the presupposition of human flourishing as our final end that I raised in chapters 6 and 7. Following a form of natural law argument, he describes a situation in which God has created human beings for whom various states of affairs are goods and therefore reasons for action, including conformity with God's will. Yet he contends, all-importantly and without justification, that *being in harmony with God's will is not a decisive reason for action*. (2002a, p. 49) I say that to have a conceptual grasp of who God is is to see that one must love God. Union with God for God's sake is the greatest good of all rational beings and created rational beings can only attain union with God by whatever route God specifies. As far as I can see, that route is completely arbitrary, within the limits of consistency. God has no

⁶⁸ Anscombe, to the contrary, says that a state of nature in which individuals executed punishment against attackers based on personal opinion could not obtain a context of peace. Therefore, there is not a private right to punish that is transferable to the state. Only the state can achieve justice. (1990, pp. 162-64)

reasons independent of Godself for choosing one coherent route over another. The route is right because it is the one actualized by God. The route does not follow necessarily from any feature of human nature. So divine practical authority does not depend on our need for coordination, but rather on the reasons constituted by the authoritative intentions communicated in divine directives.⁶⁹

Neither Aristotle nor Aquinas can envision morality as distinct from human flourishing. In Scotus' theory, right reason is aligned to God, not to some for-the-sake-of good. An act is morally good, says Scotus, if it has "all that the agent's right reason declares must pertain to the act or the agent in acting." Mere conformity to God's will is *not* sufficient. (1997, p. 180) It is not adequate just to do the right thing. A person who did the right thing out of fear or benefit or even ignorance, not believing that it was the right thing, but acting just because someone else wanted him to do so or coerced him into doing so, would not be acting morally. Each person must act on the basis of his or her own knowledge. Moral rationality is not only conformity to God's will, but also conformity to God's will for the sake of that will as just. Scotus says that the actor must "actually pass judgment upon the act and carry it out in accord with that judgment." (1997, p. 170) Scotus says that the act must be done at the right time, and in the right manner and place. It must have the right object. The agent must also will the right ultimate end, and the behavior must be chosen for the sake of that end. (1997, pp. 171f, 182)

As in the Aristotelian tradition up to his era, the justice of the act is therefore not only contingent on objective behavior, but also on motives and intentions. Moral acts require a decision of intelligence and will. For the same reason that the action of an animal following its

⁶⁹ In the same place that I sketched Anselm's theory of doing the truth, chapter 5, I noted that an artist is not the final theoretical authority with respect to the artist's own work. Others may see things that s/he doesn't. This will not apply in the case of God as Artificer. God can accurately and comprehensively interpret any and all representations made by divine artifice. God does not falsely represent what is the case in any divine artifice.

natural inclination is not free, in that it does not also rationally choose this action by discerning the good involved and loving it for its own sake, nor the final end for its sake, neither also is the animal's action morally good. We must seek our ends for the sake of the ultimate end, and the decision to do so must be free. Inevitably the question arises: Is this humanly possible?

THEOLOGICAL VOLUNTARISM AND THE VIRTUES

MacIntyre's emphasis on *social* goods is essential to a successful account of the virtues. Without such a common point of reference, there can be no basis for deciding between self-directed and other-directed actions. As we have seen, this sociality necessitates social virtues by definition. (chap. 2) Social goods are indeed goods. The crucial question, however, is the status of these goods. In the human relationship with God there exists another dimension of sociality and social goods that I say takes precedence over social goods of the kind described by MacIntyre. In Part One I pointed to the need for a framework beyond social goods in order to rank these goods. From the supra-human perspective of divine intentions, it turns out that they are contingently high-ranking goods. If indeed our flourishing is not a metaphysical necessity, then there is at least the conceptual possibility of a conflict between flourishing and the good life. And even if there is no conflict, the distinction is still in place. The *pursuit* of flourishing is therefore not coterminous with the pursuit of the good life.

If these ends are distinct, then there must be a corresponding distinction in practical rationality. If the distinction between flourishing and the good life is to make any difference in practical rationality, then a corresponding distinction in moral psychology must be possible. Does the structure of the will accommodate this distinction? Having roughed out the framework of morality and the contingent ranking of human flourishing as a good, I now have to make the case that humans can be *motivated* to actualize something other than human flourishing.

My position presents an alternative to the altruistic/egoistic dichotomy in practical rationality on the one hand, but also to the eudaimonist vision of social goods on the other hand. The third possibility is

Scotist. I argue for two broad conclusions. First, it is the dispositions required for the actualization of the good life that are genuine virtues, as distinguishable from those directed toward the flourishing life. The dispositions required for the actualization of flourishing alone are not adequately virtuous. The virtues are derived from the ends they serve. Genuine virtues serve *the* good. I look here at the origins of the Scotist structure of practical rationality in Augustine's theory of the will. I then outline Aquinas' moral theory and show the need for a better account of moral freedom than his, corresponding to the distinction between the flourishing life and the good life. I show how John Duns Scotus provides such an account through his theory of the two affections. It is our ability to pursue *the* good above our own good as final end that makes humans morally free.⁷⁰

Second, I say that eudaimonism cannot adequately explain the rationality of what it typically recognizes as the demands of justice. The Scotist theory of the will can accommodate these demands. Moreover, the Scotist theory of the will can explain the inadequacies of the Thomist theory better than the Thomist theory can explain them. I offer some comments on what our disposition toward justice is, and how we know what justice demands. I finish with suggestions about some practical differences flowing out of these theoretical distinctions.

Motivational distinctions

As we have seen in previous discussions (see chapters 3 and 5), there are reasons of varied merit for apparently virtuous behavior. It is the person's intention and motivation that distinguish genuinely virtuous behavior from simulacra. Consider three possible mental states.

1. The agent cultivates excellences merely as a means to obtaining something for his/her personal advantage.

⁷⁰ I cannot afford here to wander into soteriology, specifically the action of divine grace that alone makes this shift possible. See J. Hare (1996).

2. The agent cultivates excellences to realize goods internal to the cooperative human activity in question, goods that include the excellences themselves, goods that s/he enjoys with others.
3. The agent cultivates excellences as a means to and constitutive element of the good life as distinct from goods either to her advantage or that she can share with others.

MacIntyre's account of the virtues has sufficiently distinguished (1) and (2). The distinction between (2) and (3) emerges clearly neither in what I understand of eudaimonistic theory in general nor in MacIntyre's theory in particular. On his account, for example, the virtues are those personal dispositions that are required not only to achieve the goods of "practices" but also to the goods of an integrated life and of a tradition as well. My conclusions in the previous chapter serve to show that (3) does not necessarily describe the pursuit of these last two stages of MacIntyre's account. That is, one could pursue narrative unity in one's life and the goods of a tradition merely as ends in themselves, as in (2), rather than as constitutive of the good life (3).

The social good should not be conflated with *the* good. There is no better argument against identifying justice with the collective good than Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Society, says Niebuhr, is both an indispensable basis for, and the main obstacle to, justice. In realizing this justice, common conceptions of the common good are not good enough. The privileged classes justify their status by reference to their contributions to the common good, or to natural superiority, or to the relative virtues and vices of the classes involved, or to the conditions necessary for the goods of the arts. On the other hand, mere envy can motivate the aspirations of the underclass. Group interests dominate all levels of social interaction, including and especially international relations. "The selfishness of nations is proverbial." (1932, p. 84) We accept in the name of country what we would never accept in the name of the individual. Napoleon bathed Europe in blood and created a personal tyranny under the flag of equality, liberty and fraternity. The Russian communists uprooted

the czarist overlords, but went on to become even worse. The defense of the “honor” of a nation can justify terrible sacrifices from its citizens. A soldier may nobly sacrifice himself in war for his country, while this unselfish act masks the wrongful interests of the nation. The citizens’ lust for power can be projected on the nation and experienced vicariously. “Rationalism in morals may persuade men in one moment that their selfishness is a peril to society and in the next moment it may condone their egoism as a necessary and inevitable element in the total social harmony.” (1932, p. 41)

Doesn’t the *perceived* justice of the group’s interests, it may be objected, often motivate these acts, and therefore aren’t its members motivated to action by their *perception* of justice? Yes it does and yes they are, and this is part of Niebuhr’s argument. Politicians may identify their nation’s cause with ultimate values. Cultural imperialism can be found in the most generous of people, people who have no interest in economic advantage. This is true even in religious missionary endeavors.⁷¹

There is more to be said to the objection that we may believe our (interested) cause to be just. First, the mistaken conflation of flourishing with the good elicits a corresponding confusion at the level

⁷¹ The Italian statesman Count Carlo Sforza notes,

[It is] a precious gift bestowed by divine grace upon the British people: the simultaneous action in those islands, when a great British interest is at stake, of statesmen and diplomats coolly working to obtain some concrete political advantage and on the other side, and without previous base secret understanding, clergymen and writers eloquently busy showing the highest moral reasons for supporting the diplomatic action which is going on in Downing Street. Such was the case in the Belgian Congo. Belgian rule had been in force there for years; but at a certain moment gold was discovered in the Katanga, the Congolese province nearest to the British South African possessions; and the bishops and other pious persons started at once a violent press campaign to stigmatise the Belgian atrocities against the Negroes. What is astonishing and really imperial is that those bishops and other pious persons were inspired by the most perfect Christian good faith, and that nobody was pulling the wires behind them. (Carlo Sforza, *European Dictatorship*, 178, cited in Niebuhr 1932, p. 109))

For this reason, I do not claim that a common religious ethic as such is any more just than, say, a common secularist rationalism.

of moral psychology, preventing us from conceptually distinguishing dispositions toward these ends. The formal appearance of any number of “virtues” therefore cannot ensure the justice of the ends they serve. Practical rationality must find a way to distinguish, as Scotus has distinguished, the desire for either personal or collective flourishing on the one hand from the desire for justice on the other hand. When they are thus distinguished, only one can be primary. The other must be secondary.

Applying the conclusions of Part One, the judgments of practical reason aiming at social goods alone are not genuine virtues if they do not aim at social goods *for the sake of* the highest good. Virtuous behavior requires not only accurate reasoning about right behavior in pursuit of ends, but also rightness of ends, and above all, right will concerning the motivation toward the proper ends. Thus the proper motivation and end of virtuous behavior must be distinguished from those mediate social goods whose relationship to the good life is contingently ranked.

Augustine on human will and morality⁷²

As MacIntyre has demonstrated in *Whose Justice?* (1988), the human will is integral to moral theory from Augustine forward. Augustine’s theory of the will explains, better than Aristotle’s theory can do, how a person could know what is best for him or her to do, and yet not do it. Aristotle would have attributed such a failure either to a lack of knowledge, or to inadequate training of the desires. Augustine can explain a third possibility, that the person’s passions are misdirected by the will. (1988, p. 157)

Augustine’s theory is also radically different from the Greeks in his understanding of reason. Both Plato and Aristotle understood reason to have its own ends and to move those who possess reason toward

⁷² I borrow heavily from R.A. Markus’ account of Augustine in the following summary.

those ends. Augustine sees will as necessary to move intellect. The will, being anterior to reason, has no reasons for its bidding. The will is the determinant factor in human action. (1988, p. 156f)

Augustine follows the Greeks in believing that every person desires *eudaimonia*, or flourishing. All humans are under the influence of a diversity of “loves.” These loves are neutral in themselves, but they result in good or evil when these desires became disordered as a result of human sin, pursuing lesser goods above greater goods, and pursuing any created good above God as goodness itself. “Love” includes both natural impulses and the desire to satisfy physical and emotional needs, on one hand, and also the deliberate and conscious choices that come to shape our character as we prefer some of these desires to others, on the other hand. We have at least some capacity to decide between these loves and thus to determine some of our actions. With exercise, these choices come to shape what we desire. It is this capacity of selecting one desire over another that sets humans apart from the beasts. This capacity is the will.

It is the will that is the object of moral praise or blame. Because we have the capacity to shape and influence our desires through successive decisions, Augustine speaks of the will itself as “love” in its regulative and selective aspect. In this sense, love is *not* neutral, but blameworthy or praiseworthy.

Loving things as they ought to be loved, according to their just place in the cosmic order, is the life of virtue. “Hence, as it seems to me, a brief and true definition of virtue is ‘rightly ordered love’.”

(Augustine 1984, p. 637 (*City of God* 15.22)) Adapting his theory of goods from classical sources, Augustine classified goods according to what is desired for its own sake (*honestum*) and what is desired for the sake of something else (*utile*) or as a means to an end. We are to “enjoy” (*frui*) that which will satisfy our desire; we “use” (*utimur*) things that help us acquire things that will satisfy our desires. Ordering each in its proper place is the key to Augustine’s ethics. Humans are

to enjoy God and “use” (*utimur*) everything else. The great mistake is to pursue any created good as an end in itself. (See Augustine 1996, pp. 107, 114, 117 (*De. Doc. Christ.* 1.3; 1.20; 1.27)) So he wrote in the *Confessions*:

Truly it is by continence that we are made as one and regain that unity of self which we lost by falling apart in the search for a variety of pleasures. *For a man loves you [God] so much the less if, besides you, he also loves something else which he does not love for your sake.* (1961, p. 233 (*Confessions* 10.29); emphasis added.)

What does this mean? On the biblical understanding to which Augustine subscribes, the greatest obligation is to love God “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Unless the comprehensiveness of this imperative is taken as mere hyperbole, any interpretation of the text must explain a problem. How can we then justly love anything *else* at all? There would not seem to be any remaining resources to direct to other persons or other goods than God. Avoiding secondary questions and objections, I offer a possible point of explanation. The solution I propose is to see that we are to love other things *for the sake of* the ultimate object of love. Augustine’s ethical structure is ambivalent on the issue of self-love in discussion here. In the final analysis, his overall theory appears to be eudaimonistic. (See O’Donovan 1980.) Nevertheless Augustine’s theory of the will is important because it brings into relief an important distinction between will and disposition directed toward human goods, including the common good, on the one hand, and will and disposition directed toward the ultimate good, on the other hand. Right reason looks to the highest good, not just to social goods.

In the following I hope to show that Aquinas cannot adequately address conceptually the distinction between *beatitudo* and God as

final ends, a distinction that he nonetheless recognizes, and a distinction that is explained better by Scotus. This distinction cannot be recognized in practical rationality without a corresponding difference in the structure of the will.

Human will in Aquinas and Scotus

Scotus says that moral goodness is a secondary property that is “accidental” or “over and beyond” (*superveniens*) the primary goodness that the scholastics equated with all being. The origins of the conception in Anselm are evident. Very crudely, a person, an animal or a thing is good in the primary sense if the person or animal is simply alive and whole, if the thing does not lack any constitutive part. It is good in its existence as a being. Something has secondary goodness because it has certain properties that are suited or harmonious to something else. Food, for example, is evaluated as “good” because it has certain properties that are conducive to health. Moral goodness is a type of secondary goodness.⁷³

Suitability requires judgment. So moral goodness connotes evaluation. In keeping with what I said in chapter 7 about objective morality, the divine mind is the supreme arbiter of suitability, having a perfect knowledge of its limits and requirements. Again, according to Scotus the only strict requirement of natural law, known immediately from its terms, is that God is to be loved. Any combination of contingent ordinances consistent with that requirement, and with each other, is possible. There are no reasons for moral law apart from these basic considerations, and only the divine mind is perfectly situated to make such a judgment. Nevertheless, *humans can make a judgment that replicates this judgment and is thereby rational.*⁷⁴

⁷³ A more complete account would present a version of “prescriptive realism,” following John Hare. See Hare’s development of R.H. Hare’s prescriptivism and his exposition of its precedent in Scotus. (2001, chaps. 1-2)

⁷⁴ One interpreter of Scotus has understood him to say that human rationality *constitutes* moral goodness in the same way that God

A non-rational animal may perceive food as good in some sense, but animals lack the faculties to make judgment, including moral judgment. If an animal can “judge” goodness at all, it is only on the basis of its non-reflective perceptions and the inclinations suited to its nature. What exactly does the non-rational animal lack that humans have? The answer to this question resides in the structure of the will. I want to emphasize the difference in the theories of this structure proposed by Aquinas and Scotus. Thomas Williams (2004, sect. 5.2) notes that Scotus’s theory of the will consciously rivals that of Aquinas in response to the question of what differentiates humans from non-rational animals.

In eudaimonistic theories, our choices are only good or intelligible when they are made in pursuit of flourishing. “[T]he will,” says Aquinas, “tends naturally to its last end; for every man naturally wills happiness [*beatitudo*] and all other desires are caused by this natural desire; since whatever a man wills he wills on account of the end.” (*ST* 1. 60. 2) (Aquinas does not distinguish *beatitudo* from *the* good as such here.⁷⁵) This conclusion flows from the following line of reasoning. Every action is taken in view of a good. There is no evil or defect of good in *beatitudo*. So we cannot fail to will it.

Moral freedom in Aquinas merely refers to the distinction between the will as intellectual appetite over against sense appetite—intellectual appetite directed toward objects presented to the intellect, sense appetite toward objects presented to the senses. The good will is submitted to the intellect, which is necessarily aimed at *beatitudo*. Since the sense appetite only deals with particular objects of appetite,

creates moral goodness. This misinterprets Scotus, for whom rationality in morality is neither external to the will nor constituted by it. We are behaving morally when we will what God wills for our willing. (See Hare 2000, p. 32, *contra* Ingham 1989, p. 161.)

⁷⁵ In the following I take *beatitudo* as the conceptual counterpart to Aristotle’s *eudaimonia*. Again, the essential characteristic for this discussion of *eudaimonia/beatitudo* is the perfection of a being’s nature. In contrast to Aristotle, the scholastics of course see human perfection in the next life as the full expression of human flourishing.

it is not free. The intellectual appetite is free, Aquinas believes, because it grasps universals. This freedom consists in the choice from among multiple particulars presented to the intellect by universals. The will does not aim at this good or that good, but at goodness as a universal. Though at any given time the intellect presents one object as good and the will must choose it, over time the will chooses many different objects. Thus the will is free. Accordingly, moral failure for Aquinas is the failure of the will to be subject to what the intellect presents as the means to flourishing rather than pursuing that to which the senses are brutishly drawn.

The problem with this explanation is that, while Aquinas holds the beatific vision to be our ultimate end, biblical revelation also clearly specifies a final end distinct from *beatitudo*. So his explanation must be supplemented with another element in his account, Aquinas's recognition of God as the ultimate end of all things. The doubt that the neo-Aristotelian moral framework is conceptually adequate to this task is what I have been underlining throughout my project. What is our final end and what is the place of the final end in moral psychology?

With these questions in view, Alan Donagan (1985) detects two sorts of teleologies in the moral theory of Aquinas. The first we would label consequentialist, he says. It is directed toward results that we purpose. The second takes persons, God and fellow human beings, as ends for whose sake we accomplish results. Aquinas's structure of morality incorporates both. God is the ultimate end of all things. (And people are ends in a similar way.) *Beatitudo/felicitas/eudaimonia* is also our ultimate end. How can both claims be true without conflict or contradiction? Donagan's interpretation of Aquinas, though it is the correct interpretation, I think, will not resolve this problem.

In order to answer the question, Donagan says, it is crucial first to establish Aquinas' insight into Aristotelian final causes. A final cause cannot be something that does not yet exist, such as Jane's new table

or her *eudaimonia*. Something that does not yet exist cannot be the cause of anything. Because it does not exist, it cannot, obviously, be the *efficient* cause of its own construction. But neither can the actual wood-glue-and-screws table itself be the *final* cause, for the same reason—it doesn't exist yet. A final *result* (Jane's new table, the actualization of her *eudaimonia*) cannot be a final cause. The final cause, or whatever it is that sets in motion whatever it is that will produce that result; does so before the result exists. So the final cause of Jane's table is not the table itself, but rather something like the idea or purpose of the table in the carpenter's mind that puts him to work in constructing her table. (For Aristotle, the final cause of a table is the *form* of a table.) Jane's new table is an end, but it is not the final cause of her new table.

In the same way, on the understanding of the orthodox Christian traditions, it is not *eudaimonia* that is our final end, but rather God. For Aquinas, *eudaimonia* (*beatitudo/felicitas*) is to know and love and experience God "face to face"—without mediation or impediment—in the next life. God is our end. We *obtain* God in the experience of *eudaimonia* (*beatitudo/felicitas*). The importance of this distinction is that, as Donagan says, "*Obtaining the end is not the end.*" (1985, p. 10; his emphasis) *Eudaimonia*, as the obtainment of God then, is not our true end. *Eudaimonia* is a result efficiently caused.

My question is this: do Aristotle/Aquinas/MacIntyre have the conceptual resources needed to make a distinction in ends in their moral psychology that corresponds to this distinction? They do not. The pursuit of the good *for its own sake* is not conceptually possible in eudaimonism.

Donagan proposes a reconstruction of Aquinas' reasoning, and it is worth summarizing here. The ultimate end of any artifact is the maker him- or herself. We as humans make things for ourselves, for our purposes and our good. *A fortiori*, God as maker of all things is the end of all created things. There is a difference between rational

creatures and other created beings, however. Non-rational creatures are moved as instruments without any rational participation on their part. On the other hand, rational creatures can move themselves toward their ends by their will and intellect, not as instruments, but as agents. God (or a human being) cares about instruments instrumentally. God (or a human being) cares about agents for their own sakes. For this reason only rational creatures can attain God intellectually, by knowing and loving God. And also for this reason, among all creatures, God uniquely wants rational beings for their own sake, and wants them not only as a species, but also as individuals.

So rational beings are ends in themselves. This is the foundation of the moral law for Aquinas, according to Donagan. "Law is nothing but a certain reason and rule of operation." (*Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.114.3, cited in Donagan 1985, p. 13) In governing ourselves by reason and rule, we emulate and actually participate in divine providence. The purpose of the law is to make humans good, and what makes humans good is a good will. A good will is a will that loves God and loves fellow human beings. All morality then is predicated on the love of pre-existent ends, God and human beings. *Eudaimonia* is an end for us, but it is not our ultimate end. Only God is our final end in this sense.

My objection to this theory, at least as Donagan reconstructs it, is that Aquinas cannot show how the pursuit of both *eudaimonia* and God as our final end is a possibility of practical rationality. In his summary of the solution to how apparently contrary ends, God and *beatitudo*, are harmonized, Donagan says, "Rational creatures... act for their own sakes. But *what their own sakes require is that they obtain the ultimate end* of the whole of things by loving and understanding it." (1985, p. 15; emphasis mine) So, as in the case of Augustine's comments above, one end is subsumed under the other. Here, however, it is the self that is primary, and God, as final end, is secondary. We obtain God for our own sakes.

How can it be that rational creatures should obtain the ultimate end of all things—God, the ultimate maker and ultimate rational being—for *their* own sakes rather than for God’s sake? God should not be understood as something made by humans, something instrumental to human ends. (Donagan rightly dismisses process theology as a possible solution.) Just the reverse is true. On Aquinas’ theory, as we have seen, a maker of non-rational entities makes those entities for his or her own sake. Rational beings are ends to be desired for their own sake. But if God wants rational creatures “for their own sakes,” God also and by priority wants them for God’s sake (as the artifacts of a maker). As rational beings we can see this. Right reason must take it into account. I do not see how Aquinas’s theory of the will enables the moral agent to do so.

The Aristotelian structure of the will can will its own good. It can see how the realization of its own good relates to *the* good. But it cannot will *the* good as an end for its own sake, as distinct from its own good, as the ultimate end. It can only will *the* good inasmuch as *the* good is instrumental or even constitutive of its flourishing. For Aristotle, this deficit never becomes apparent, given the eternal fixity of a form (flourishing) as a final cause and the ability of unaided reason to deduce what that cause is.⁷⁶ I see a gap in moral psychology opened up by the distinction between flourishing and the good life. We can deny the possibility of a gap between flourishing and goodness by maintaining with Aquinas and against the presuppositions of post-Aristotelian science that the natural order is not only intelligible, but also necessary. If we don’t deny it, then that gap must be bridged. Aristotelianism’s moral psychology cannot bridge it.

For Aquinas, the scriptures are supremely authoritative. Yet he does not seem to recognize the impressive evidence in the biblical literature

⁷⁶ Aristotle understands that gap to be filled as the intellect reaches *its telos*, in conformity with the reality of the form of flourishing as eternal and necessary. (See MacIntyre 1990, pp. 172f.) For both Aristotle and Aquinas, the will never acts contrary to a fully correct moral judgment of the intellect.

that humans *ought* to pursue God as the ultimate good, for God's own sake. The writers of the Psalms implore God to intervene on their behalf for the sake of God's name or for God's own sake. The prophets sometimes have God explicitly denying that it is for the sake of any human or group (such as Israel) that God has intervened, but that God has done so for God's own sake. (See Ezekiel 36.22, 32.) Jesus warns his disciples of the harassment and death they will experience for his sake. "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life *for my sake* will find it." (Matthew 10.18, 22, 39; emphasis added) The suffering that inevitably accompanies a life in pursuit of the ultimate good in the context of a world enamored with lesser goods is for the sake of God and in order to have a right relationship with God. It is never framed in terms of any reward or satisfaction external to that right relationship with God. Yet despite his modification of the Aristotelian framework, Aquinas's moral structure is constrained by that framework to a *eudaimonistic* principle.

The problem of the pursuit of both *eudaimonia* and God in practical rationality can be viewed from another angle. The obtainment-of-the-ultimate-end is not the ultimate end, Donagan claims. If this is so, as I think it is, then we cannot obtain the end by pursuing the obtainment-of-the-end, but only by pursuing the end itself. An analogy may make this clearer. For a rational agent, the pursuit of flourishing (*eudaimonia/beatitudo/felicitas*) as our ultimate end is misguided in the same way that the direct pursuit of pleasure for its own sake is misguided. Pleasure of the best sort cannot be pursued directly. It supervenes on the achievement of goods internal to socially collaborative activities. I need add nothing more here to my summary of MacIntyre's Aristotelian theory in chapter 2. Likewise, to pursue the beatific vision for our own good is not, strictly speaking, to pursue God. To pursue *beatitudo* itself as an *experience to achieve* is to pursue something other than the end itself. It is to pursue something we can obtain, rather than to pursue God.

In sum, Donagan's explication of Aquinas has simply pushed one step further back his original question of whether our final end is God or *eudaimonia*, and rephrased it. In the question of pursuing *the* good, as distinct from pursuing *our* good, Donagan's interpretation runs up against a structural limit in Aquinas's theory of the will. On that structure, if I understand it correctly, humans *cannot* seek their ultimate end (God). They can only pursue their own *beatitudo*. At best they love God as their greatest good for the sake of their *beatitudo*. This is unacceptable. It reduces the place of God in moral psychology. It diminishes moral psychology to something less than full rationality in view of *the* good.

I follow Scotus in contending that Aquinas' understanding of morality here is insufficient to explain genuine morality and genuine moral freedom. The mere alignment of desire with deductive intelligence in pursuit of our good can never amount to the morality and the freedom we ascribe to moral beings, the ability to pursue *the* good as distinct from *our* good.⁷⁷

But, it might be objected, why can't our good be seen as a *constitutive* element of the good life in the way outlined earlier by MacDonald? (See chapter 4.) As a matter of fact, it can be part of the good life and it is, contingently. But the ranking of the two is the difference between good and evil.

Scotus' account of the two inclinations in the will

The inadequacy of eudaimonist theories of the will can also be illustrated in their explanation of moral failure. Aquinas says we must will *beatitudo* as a universal, not in particular. We must love *beatitudo* as a universal because we necessarily love that in which there is no evil or defect of good. We do not necessarily love *beatitudo* in

⁷⁷ Contrary to some characterizations of Scotus, his theory is not motivated by the need to explain how we can be free to do evil. (See my comments on Anselm in chapter 5.) Rather, his concern is to show how we can be genuinely moral in exalting God as ultimate good.

particular, however. To do so would exclude the possibility of sin; we would never *not* be able to choose rightly.⁷⁸ On the Thomist theory, as noted above, sin is roughly the triumph of the sense appetite (toward objects presented to the senses) over intellectual appetite (directed toward objects presented to the intellect).

Aquinas' theory of the will does not capture as well as Anselm's theory something additional that is needed for an adequate explanation of evil in the will. Anselm proposes a thought experiment, which Scotus invokes later, concerning a hypothetical angel "that had a purely intellectual appetite as such and not one that was free." Since angels are understood to be spirits, they do not have a sense appetite. Accordingly, the hypothetical angel would be unable *not* to will its own benefit. It could not therefore be morally accountable. (1997, p. 298 (*Ord.* 2, dist 6, q. 2)) Angels *are* morally accountable. Therefore something more than intellect must be necessary for morality. What is it?

Scotus' understanding of morality incorporates a distinction already suggested in Augustine's theory of the two cities/two loves, and drawn specifically in Anselm to answer this question, the *affectio iustitiae* and the *affectio commodi*. What these terms mean has recently been the subject of much debate and the conclusions of this debate are critical to my own account. There seems to be no controversy about translating the first term, roughly, as "affection for justice." What "justice" entails *is* disputed. The *affectio commodi* has conventionally been translated as "affection of advantage" or "affection for the advantageous." This translation, however, begs the question of its meaning. Allan Wolter (Duns Scotus 1997, p. 298), Mary Elizabeth Ingham (1996, pp. 33f), and John Hare 2001, p. 62) all understand the *affectio commodi* as the self-regarding inclination

⁷⁸ In response, Scotus says that this cannot be the case, because if we necessarily desire that in which there is no evil or defect of good, then we would necessarily desire particulars even *more* than the universal, since *beatitudo* in its particulars has even more of every aspect of good than it does as a universal. (1997, pp. 155ff.; *Ord.* IV, suppl., dist 49, qq. 9-10.)

over against the other-regarding inclination of the *affectio iustitiae*, the inclination to the love of other things for their own sake. Yet these same interpreters acknowledge that the *affectio commodi* also refers to the perfection of nature.

Thomas Williams (1995) does not offer a translation of the affection, but argues that the term encompasses not only the desire for what is beneficial to oneself but also the love of others for their own sake. The conclusive evidence for this interpretation, in my estimation, is found in Williams' combination of three claims by Scotus:

1. One or the other of the two affections elicits every act.
2. The *affectio iustitiae* never elicits a sinful act [and therefore all sinful acts are elicited by the *affectio commodi*].
3. There are sins that can result from loving others for their own sake (e.g., stealing something for a friend).

Therefore, the *affectio commodi* includes the love of others for their own sake, at least under some circumstances, and the *affectio iustitiae* is *not* simply the love of people or things for their own sake.

(Williams 1995)

The relevance of this conclusion for my discussion is that Scotus' theory—and I follow him in this—represents an alternative structure of morality to both the self-regarding/other-regarding dichotomy, on the one hand, and also to the *eudaimonist* account based on social goods, on the other hand. The third possibility is an account that, following on the conclusions of the last chapter, pursues justice understood as conceptually distinct from both personal gain *and also from the common good of humankind*.

The importance of the two inclinations in the will

Genuine moral freedom requires an inclination to *the* good as well as an inclination to our advantage or to what fits our nature, as ends in

themselves. An animal is driven by the *affectio commodi* to consume its food, and recognizes in it a natural good. The animal is not free. It lacks the ability to conceptualize that consuming its food is not only a good, but right in view of realizing a greater good. More importantly, it lacks the ability *to will that greater good for its own sake*. Every rational creature has both inclinations and both are good. But every human being is born with a disordered relationship between the two. When the *affectio commodi* overwhelms our affection for justice, then we have an improper regard for what is to our benefit. People should want their own *beatitudo*, says Scotus, but not want it more than they want “God to have everything good.” (1997, p. 301) Ultimately, we can love God as our good and we can love God as the proper end of all things, but the difference is crucial. In proper moral psychology we love what is to our benefit *because* it is (contingently) just. Our good is not necessarily just and therefore we need to address the question of whether God has willed it, whether it is part of the good God intends. The ends of human flourishing do not determine the moral law. That distinction in objective morality, flagged by Scotus, has a corresponding distinction in his theory of practical rationality in the human subject. It is the affection for justice that allows us to choose in agreement with the moral law. It is the affection for justice that allows us, that is, to be moral. (Williams 2004, 5.2)

In his development of the two affections of the will, Scotus identifies the intellectual appetite in Aquinas’ theory with the *affectio commodi*. As a result, *the most important distinction for morality is not between inclinations to one’s good as presented to the senses or by the intelligence, but between both of these inclinations together, and the inherent human inclination to the requirements of justice.*

This distinction implies at least the theoretical possibility that the two could come into conflict. In such a case justice would require choosing the good life over *our* good or the common good. Why should we believe that we could not will our flourishing?

In beginning a reply, it must be emphasized that there is no evil in the will to flourish as such. The human will properly contains both inclinations. Scotus, a.k.a. the Subtle Doctor, makes important qualifications here in keeping with the *affectio commodi* that we all possess. We cannot will *against* our *beatitudo* as a good without any defect or evil. It does not follow from this impossibility, however, that we must actively will those goods. We can *fail* to will our flourishing. Likewise, a person cannot *will* his/her unhappiness (*miseriam*), but it does not follow from this that s/he must will flourishing. We can fail to will against unhappiness. As a result we can will in accordance with the affection for justice over our affection for what seems to fit our nature viewed narrowly. Morally good and morally bad acts have in common that they are acts of a free will. (1997, p. 177 (*Ord. II*, dist. 40)).⁷⁹

Scotus gives an example of how we can fail to will our own flourishing, even without following the affection for justice, and indeed in acting against it. A person can fornicate knowing that this cannot be squared with flourishing—knowing that it is a mortal sin that will lead to damnation rather than union with God—yet will to do so anyway, he says. (1997, pp. 155ff (*Ord. IV*, suppl., dist 49, qq. 9-10)) That we can wrongly fail to will our flourishing, Scotus is saying, is evidence that we can do so justly. In a moment, I will consider a difficulty for eudaimonism in explaining moral virtues in terms of flourishing. The larger question, however, is whether we can actually be motivated to act in accordance with justice when justice conflicts with our flourishing. We can conceive of it as a good, I say, and then will it as a good independent of our flourishing.

***Eudaimonia* or justice**

Does the *affectio iustitiae*, or anything like it, exist? In elaborating his form of eudaimonism, MacIntyre has recently recounted the

⁷⁹ This, too, runs counter to Aristotle and Aquinas, who do not think that we can act contrary to a fully correct moral judgment of the intellect.

development of characteristics in the human. Some are identical with those of non-rational animals such as dolphins. Others are different. (1999, pp. 63-79) Dolphins achieve goods, and even though they do not reason, they can even be said to act for a reason. Flourishing as a concept is the same for human and non-human animals. For both rational and non-rational animals, to flourish is always to flourish *in virtue* of some characteristics.

In delineating human distinctiveness, MacIntyre mentions three dimensions of the transition from infancy to the status of an independent practical reasoner. All three require language and a variety of conceptual uses of language. First, the satisfaction of bodily wants represents many human goods. Non-rational animals respond to this form of good. Humans, however, can also attain a stage at which they can evaluate their reasons for behavior in terms of goods that do not respond only to bodily needs. Second, we develop the ability to gain the necessary distance, to distinguish immediate infantile desires from our good/*the* good and to bring those desires themselves under evaluation. Without these capacities they would therefore reason from unsound premises and act from improper motivation. Third, we can imagine the future.

I have no objection to these observations as such. Because the eudaimonist model cannot adequately distinguish from the good or *eudaimonia* from justice, however, it is unable to conceptualize a fourth dimension distinguishing human from non-human animals. The ability to abstract and conceptualize is also the person's ability to conceive of herself as object, to stand back from her situation. In this power, humans have not only the ability to conceptualize and abstract from our own situation, but also *the ability to evaluate as "good" even that that cannot be imagined to benefit us, or that may even harm us*, as these terms are commonly used. This is the ability to conceive of justice as distinct from flourishing.

The pursuit of justice

The difference between the two inclinations is *not* the same difference as that between egoistic and altruistic motivation. The two pairings are disanalogous in at least three ways. First, it does not follow from the priority of the *affectio iustitiae* that the person should value herself either more or less than her neighbor. The nobility of self-sacrifice as such does not follow from the two affections, nor for that matter does the irrationality of self-sacrifice. On this question it is the end that determines the rightness of the disposition. In the example of a soldier, it is not sacrifice itself that accomplishes the good pursued, the defense of the country. General George S. Patton was correct: “No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for *his* country.” Nevertheless, rightly defending her country may result in the soldier’s death and that of her fellows-in-arms, whether in victory or defeat. And it may be the case that the soldiers see in advance that the right course of action will almost surely lead to their deaths. The requirements of justice hold even if my/our good is at stake. It is because of the contingently high ranking of social goods that the disposition to courage is rational.

The two inclinations differ in a second way from the egoistic/altruistic dichotomy of self-regarding/other-regarding motives. In the dichotomy, one is a contrary of the other, so that the agent cannot have both interested and altruistic motivations simultaneously. The two Scotist inclinations need not necessarily be in tension. The Scotist structure *concur*s with eudaimonism in denying the validity of the dichotomy. Indeed, as it contingently turns out, God has ultimately ensured that the two are never in tension as long as the inclination to flourishing is subordinate to the inclination to justice.

Aristotelian theories of ethics prior to Scotus recognize that many goods cannot be pursued directly. Pleasure of the best kind, as noted above and in chapter 2, is obtained only indirectly through the achievement of internal goods such as those of MacIntyrean practices. Eudaimonists might therefore protest that I have failed to see that

Aristotelian flourishing itself is, after all, best understood as the indirect result of the pursuit of the many constitutive and just goods of the good life. And so, the objection continues, there is a necessary self-effacement in the pursuit of flourishing that I have not acknowledged.

My reply has two parts. First, the objection misidentifies my aim. The object of rationality, on my account, is not self-effacement. Self-effacement is not necessarily good, for the reasons just noted. It is the primacy of the good life over flourishing, whether personal or corporate, that is critical. Second, this primacy cannot coherently be upheld in eudaimonism, as far as I can tell, since on the eudaimonist account our ultimate end is flourishing. Now, it is true that on the fully informed Scotist perspective, we cannot fail to see that in loving God by the particular means that God has contingently specified, we are thereby achieving our flourishing. Nor can we fail to see that God has contingently willed our flourishing. It is also true that the association is not simply instrumental, since it is part of a complex interpersonal relationship between God and humans. We know God only because of God's self-revelation and love for us. As we become co-lovers of this God, we soon realize that we are not meeting any divine need or enriching God in any way. God's desire for our welfare and love for us is unconditional and is a result of the overflowing abundance of God's excellences. This, in turn, becomes a cause for adoration and love of those excellences. This love and adoration, in turn, is enriching and fulfilling and ennobling in rational creatures: we take on characteristics of that which we meditate on and admire. We see, in yet another turn, that this is God's intention. Both this intention and the fruition of this intention become a new source of love, gratitude, and wonder-filled meditation. The end of the story is a life of union with God, an existence in which our flourishing, in still another turn, consists in the unobscured admiration of God in body/mind/soul/work, and the cycle goes on and on. Under the actual formulation of the

moral law, the two affections do not conflict unless the inclination to our own benefit overrides the inclination to justice.

Critics on the other side of the egoistic/altruistic debate might therefore object here: Since we know that in pursuing the good we are—even though I have said “contingently”—pursuing our good, isn’t the inclination for justice merely a form of acting for our benefit after all? What do the biblical expressions of losing one’s life in order to find it, for example, mean if not that our ultimate motivation is to realize our own flourishing? (e.g., Matthew 10.39; 1 Peter 5.4)

In reply: losing one’s life to find it does entail a sort of death, and the life gained cannot be found without that death. Yet it is a death *to* self and its tyranny, not *of* the self *per se*. What emerges is a regenerated self. This should not be confused either with acquiescence to social oppression or to the irrational demands of another. Even in the personal requirements to turn the other cheek and to go the extra mile, we see the assertion of a redefined will that refuses both ineffectual rebellion against unjust authority, and also mere acquiescence in frustrated defeat. In the assertion of a higher authority, the self is quietly affirmed without the destructiveness of frustrated pride.

My reply here consists of the third way in which the egoistic/altruistic dichotomy of self-regarding/other-regarding psychology does not capture the Scotist conception any more than it captures the Aristotelian conception. Because the conception does not negate our inclination to our own benefit in its properly subordinate position, to point out that the person is sure to benefit or that morality realizes the subject’s interests and desires, is not a telling objection. It is no criticism that the pursuit of flourishing is *a* motivating factor, as long as it is not the *primary* motivating factor, because the two affections are not necessarily contraries. Indeed, the virtues of faith and hope presuppose an interest in one’s well-being.

Yet the love of God for God's sake as the highest good, I contend, is the true end and engine of morality. Flourishing and justice are related in such a way that we cannot simultaneously will our flourishing for the sake of justice and also will justice for the sake of our flourishing. The conception of God as final end and the concept of *eudaimonia* as final end are contraries. If one is psychologically ultimate, the other can only be, at best, penultimate. As John Hare points out, in our primary concern for flourishing it is possible to focus on the secondary as means to that end, losing ourselves in attention to those means, although never really forgetting the end. (Hare 2000, p. 38) The secondary may even be constitutive of the primary in a way that is not simply instrumental. But if another's well-being is constitutive of my flourishing, for example, the centrality of my flourishing makes my interest in the other's welfare conditional on its contribution to my flourishing. This conditionality is inherent to eudaimonism. If flourishing is central in the way claimed by eudaimonists, then other considerations are secondary. If the conditional structure is not present, then it is not eudaimonism. If justice is secondary, even if we pursue justice in some sense "for its own sake," we cannot truly make it central without self-deception. (Hare 2000, p. 38; Hare's conclusions here are somewhat different than mine.)⁸⁰ It is precisely our ability to will *the* good as distinct from *our* good that marks the Scotist advancement.

Objections

But, it might be objected, we have the ability to foresee the realization of future goods and the future realization of goals, and to take vicarious pleasure *now* from what our future selves will experience. Can't we thus similarly enjoy through imagination what we may *never* actually experience when a good is realized? And therefore isn't the distinction on which I am insisting unnecessary?

⁸⁰ In considering their personal histories, it is quite likely that the life and practice of Aquinas et al. surpassed their theory on this

The objection does not apply. We *know* that there is a difference between making the end present to our imagination and really being present at the actualization of that end. This sort of imagination is part of our ability to abstract, but there is no self-deception involved. Though we know that we may not be present at the actual realization of the goal, this knowledge does not prevent us from acting in ways that seem likely to prevent our presence there. Nevertheless we can pursue ends such as these that transcend our benefit.

Another objection questions if the Scotist position is sufficiently motivated. Can we do it? In reply, I say that the best reason for thinking that it *can* be done is that it *is* done. Again, my intent is not to set forth an ethic of supererogation or of self-effacement as a good and end in itself. And I have no illusions that a consistently self-disadvantageous or group-disadvantageous position would be easily motivated. But we know that it is possible because we see specific instantiations of it in dispositions and behavior for which there is no other plausible explanation. By dying for their cause, for example, atheistic Marxists (i.e., persons not motivated by possible rewards in an afterlife) have sacrificed their lives and any hope of personal participation in the society they envision. Certainly, the recurrent corruption and hypocrisy of the political leadership in Marxist states demonstrates the problems for long-term motivation to self-sacrifice. To the extent that the account I am presenting is actually realized, it stems first from an initial motivation in pursuit of goods that are external to the practice in question. MacIntyre's explanation of moral education mentioned earlier in this chapter stops short. Ultimately, our appreciation of these goods and our enlargement and projection of the self toward these goods is such that our former, untrained interests can be willingly sacrificed for the realization of those goods: an artist risks his closest relationships, personal health, and personal financial solvency in the realization of his craft; a victim of a natural disaster

question. They often seem more interested in God than beatitude as end.

refuses evacuation without her pet dog; a woman willfully lives in poverty in the service of the poor, not for the *feeling* of reward that supervenes on the accomplishment of this mission—as reinforcing of her convictions as that feeling may be—or for any reward she may receive, but for the accomplishment of the mission.

What goes for MacIntyrean practices can also be extrapolated to the framework of an entire existence. It is not only the ability of rational beings to achieve goods by stepping back from and delaying the gratification of strong physical needs in view of future goods that distinguishes us. It is also our ability to conceive of goods from which we cannot consciously imagine that we will ever profit. It is in part our ability to form concepts and to act on those concepts, independent of our own biological (or social or political) interests, that differentiates humans from other animals. (I will not attempt here to refute the claims of behaviorism.) A dog may be killed in protecting its owner, but it will never consciously reflect on the possibility of its death and proceed in a course of action that almost guarantees that it will die. We are inspired by Samwise Gamgee and determine, if ever the choice is forced upon us, to emulate him when, just to cite one example, he leaves behind his beloved cookware and all the genuine goods of ordinary life that it symbolizes, in order to accomplish a mission to Mordor that he believes will entail his death. I do not think that contemporary eudaimonism can explain this act or the disposition that lies beneath it.

I have questioned the assumption in eudaimonism that if we realize our flourishing, we are thereby realizing the good life. The eudaimonistic corollary under question at present is the assumption that in pursuing the good life I am inevitably pursuing my flourishing. If the self-directed/other-directed dichotomy is misguided, as eudaimonists believe, then there must be a plausible explanation for the demands of justice in terms of *my* flourishing. I don't see such an explanation forthcoming. Let's look at this problem more closely.

A problem for the eudaimonist conception of the will

Flourishing is dependent on my personal appropriation of goods partly external to myself.⁸¹ Unfortunately, the achievement of goods may be frustrated by uncontrollable circumstances. Despite this cold fact, MacIntyre says that genuine virtues persist. (198) I agree. I want to leverage this disjunction, however, to point out the explanatory advantages of the Scotist position. This position can explicate two phenomena that seem to pose problems for eudaimonism: the rationality of the persistence of the virtues even when the individual cannot attain a good, and the rationality of that persistence when she does not benefit in the good attained.

An important problem for the eudaimonistic structure of the will grows out of its claim that genuinely virtuous dispositions persist whether or not goods are actually achieved. The virtues, it is said, are required to realize social goods. MacIntyre largely *defines the virtues in terms of those goods*, as I have shown. (See chap. 2.) On the other hand, the realization of *eudaimonia* depends on some circumstances beyond the control of the moral agent. (Casey 1990, pp. v-vi) To become Aristotle's great-souled man (*megalopsyche*), for example, one needs material means, good fortune, and the Y-chromosome. Yet MacIntyre also says that the genuinely virtuous are virtuous *regardless of consequences*, that is, whether *eudaimonia* is realized or not. These two assertions sit ill together. How can the virtues *both* be tied to specific goods and yet persist even if those goods cannot be actualized, say, and the subject *knows* that they cannot be actualized?

The classic answer to the question is manifold. First, it is claimed, the question mistakenly treats eudaimonism as a species of consequentialism. My perplexity centers on consequences, whereas eudaimonism is *not* consequentialist. Second, it is claimed, the

⁸¹ Again, everything depends here on what is understood by "flourishing." If it simply means whatever our end happens to be, for whatever purpose we have that end, then I have no real disagreement. If the realization of flourishing is *only*, or even *primarily*, conceived of as for our own sake, then it is merely an anthropocentric good and my criticism stands.

question reflects a failure to grasp that the virtues themselves are partly constitutive of the good life. In large part, to flourish simply is to lead a life of virtue. Third, continues the rebuttal, my insistence on a distinction between the flourishing life and the good life is partly due to my failure to recognize the human ability to enlarge the self to encompass a broad conception of flourishing, one that includes my context. The virtuous “self” includes all my significant social relationships (family, friends, country, humankind) and perhaps even relationships with non-human entities (animals, the inanimate environment, great works of art). The eudaimonist self is not conceived as the modern unencumbered individual, but as person-in-relationship. In application, this results in dispositions for specific types of behavior performed with specific motivations and intentions, all pointed at goods and ultimately at *the* good. This directedness distinguishes genuine virtues from simulacra. As my previous discussions here have noted, for example, a soldier who overcomes his/her fear only for a paycheck is obviously not courageous in the right sense. Neither is a soldier properly courageous who overcomes his/her fear only for his/her welfare, rather than for the common good in the pursuit of a just war. I shouldn’t be thinking in terms of self-regarding and other-regarding motives, according to which thinking we would be motivated either egoistically or altruistically. Eudaimonism entails thinking in terms of social goods and of the shared common good.

This answer to my question falls short in each case. In reply, first, I say that eudaimonism has to take a stand. It must affirm that human flourishing is not just good from an anthropocentric perspective, but also according to an eternal and necessary metaphysical truth. This affirmation will effectively close the gap that I have opened up between the ends of flourishing and goodness in moral psychology. If flourishing is good in an absolute sense, according to an eternal law from a supra-human perspective, then to pursue flourishing just is to pursue the good life. For the reasons given in chapter 7, this position

runs counter to the presuppositions of modern scientific discovery. If eudaimonism does not make some such assertion, on the other hand, then it *is* indeed consequentialist in the relevant respect. (See chapter 6.) For if the good of flourishing is contingent, either on God's will or something else, then seeking flourishing is insufficient as an end from the perspective of moral psychology. Flourishing is, at most, penultimate. Flourishing in this sense is a result, not a form that acts as a final cause in the way that it does for Aristotle and Aquinas. So to pursue flourishing as an end is therefore to pursue it as a consequence.

To the eudaimonistic position that the flourishing life is the life of the virtues, I say that Aristotelian virtue is not its own reward *tout court*, not the *full* expression of *eudaimonia*, as it is in Stoicism. There are greater goods in view, social goods in which the agent shares with others. It will not suffice to make the virtues and *eudaimonia* coterminous.

The third eudaimonistic answer to my question about the persistence of the virtues in spite of circumstances was that the "self" of eudaimonism is not the unencumbered self. It can encompass the context of the self. My question, it might be said, presupposes a false dichotomy of self-directedness and other-directedness that eudaimonism denies in the concept of the common good. Goods are communal, not dichotomously either self- or other-regarding. In reply, I agree that the dichotomy is wrong-headed. A principal reason why the self-regarding/other-regarding dichotomy, though ultimately wrong-headed, often forms a part of plausible rivals to Aristotelianism, is that because for me to pursue others' interests or even "the common good," it is sometimes necessary to forfeit any foreseeable realization of goods in which I can credibly be understood to be present and to participate. We saw this in the case of the Marxist martyr. The rationality of this forfeit must be explained. I used it defensively above. Now I wish to use it aggressively against eudaimonism. The difficulty for the eudaimonistic position is to explain how courage that requires risk to the conventional boundaries

of the self, or even the sacrifice of the self, is always rational.

Consider two sorts of cases of courage.

In the first sort, a person makes sacrifices for a good and yet does not achieve it. A parent raises a child in exemplary fashion, for example. The child turns out to be a bad human being. The parent still loves the child, though years of sacrifice are apparently wasted, and yet declares himself to be without regret, indeed, declares himself *willing in hindsight to repeat the whole labor of love*. The only good realized is having loved the child. An Aristotelian understanding of the self surpasses modern individualism to encompass family, friends, country, and deities. Aristotle says, for example: “Parents, then, love their children as themselves (for their issue are by virtue of their separate existence a sort of other selves).” (1947, p. 1072 (NE 8, 12 (1161b28)) But how can the dispositions coming from such identification be said to be in pursuit of the common good when the child does not share in the parent’s conception of the good and does not contribute to the well-being of the parent or the community? An understanding of the virtues themselves as partly constitutive of the good life can only partly account for the rationality of this persistence. In fact, it may not enter into the parent’s specific motivation in any important way in this instance. The only good realized has not been used or obtained by the self, since the goods attained are better understood with respect to giving than to attaining. Eudaimonism lacks the concepts to explain such “goods.” Or, given the knowledge of hindsight, it may simply deny that the parent’s attitude is rational.

The second instance of virtue amplifies this inadequacy. A person makes sacrifices for a good and *does* achieve it: a soldier dies defending her country. How can this soldier be said to have achieved something of the *common* good in which she participates? In what common good can she share if she is dead? Whence then the persistence of the obligation to courage? Eudaimonism might posit some further metaphysical or religious cosmology involving immortality or transcendence of the self, so as to guarantee that in

pursuing the good I am also realizing my good. Aquinas, attempting to synthesize Aristotelianism with biblical and Augustinian insights, identifies flourishing with the beatific vision of the next life.⁸² Such a cosmology may be ultimately required as part of a comprehensive explanation for morality—Part One says that it is—but are persons without this cosmology excused from the demands of justice? Most such persons do not seek such an excuse. Such persons often exemplify dispositions to courage in pursuit of her conception of the good, dispositions that the Aristotelian model cannot plausibly explain as the natural and rational realization of *eudaimonia*, rather than as the pursuit of a just good conceived as distinct from *her* good.⁸³ That is, they can envision a frame of reference beyond human flourishing, yet short of positive claims about an ultimate metaphysical or theological framework. Such an ultimate frame of reference is still necessary, I say, but the sub-ultimate frame of reference in such a case could provisionally conceive of her good, or the good of human flourishing, as distinct from *the* good. She can envision a good in which she will not participate, except through the satisfaction of having acted in conformity to that vision of the good. The eudaimonist conception of the encumbered self is not adequate to explain this. The goods we pursue can transcend even the interests of the self-in-community, the common good as generally conceived, or the perfection of our being, to will our final end for its own sake.

Eudaimonists might respond with the counterclaim that any such move is *de facto* proof we have *not* transcended “self,” *not* surpassed the interests of *eudaimonia*. The soldier mentioned above is, after all, still pursuing the enlarged understanding of her self.

I question the usefulness of such a fluid concept of the self. If *everything* is the self (or potentially can be) then *nothing* is the self. If “self” can expand without limit, then it ceases to have any meaning

⁸² See MacIntyre on the theological nature of the structure of morality in both Aristotle and Aquinas. (1990)

⁸³ See Duns Scotus (1997, p. 282) for a similar example.

that helps the eudaimonistic account against the Scotist account. Such a self is selflessly disposed to the extent that “self” is not conceptually adequate to the task of distinguishing motivations. And thus in a backhanded way, it concedes my central claim concerning our ability to love beyond the interests of the self, on any standard use of the term: the eudaimonist claim becomes unfalsifiable.

A better account of the will is needed to explain how goods other than the virtues themselves are genuine goods even if they do not contribute to my flourishing—to my interests or to my-interests-as-part-of-our-interests. There is a third possibility both to this dichotomy and also to eudaimonism. I say that the moral being can pursue ends that transcend even the range of the self, at least as it is typically understood by contemporary eudaimonism. Humans have the capacity to form dispositions even to act in accordance with a vision of goods that they will not *possess* or *share*, in any but the most metaphorical or psychological sense of these terms. It is this ability that constitutes genuine moral freedom. Eudaimonism can conceptualize the difference between a final cause and a final result. It cannot conceptualize the contingency of final causes as Scotism can. Nor can it conceptualize a corresponding difference in the will that accounts for what it recognizes as humanly possible.

I have managed to spin this account this far without saying much either about what the inclination to justice is, or to what it inclines us with any specificity. Nor have I said how we know what justice is. The epistemic question is not central to my thesis. Nevertheless, it behooves me to make some suggestions here and in the next chapter. In the following I will consider one proposal by Thomas Williams. Though I have followed many of his conclusions concerning Scotus, I will offer reasons to think that he is mistaken here. I then offer my own solution.

Written on the heart

Scotus never expressly defines the *affectio iustitiae*. Thomas Williams suggests that the description of the *affectio iustitiae* most consonant with everything else Scotus says is “an inclination in the will that prompts it to act in accordance with the moral law simply as such.” (1995, sect. 4) The moral law cannot be “read off” of God’s creation. Unaided reason can only know with certainty those moral truths that are *per se notum ex terminis*, says Scotus. It cannot seize on the moral law on its own. How then do we reconcile the affection for justice with Paul’s claim that there is a natural law “written on our hearts”? (Romans 2.15)

Williams says that even though Scotus ties the metaphysical dependence of the moral law to the will of God, and that there are therefore *no* reasons for concluding that the moral law necessarily stipulates one thing or another, this does not mean that we can only know the moral law by knowing God’s will. Williams interprets Scotus as saying that we have an immediate knowledge of the moral law much like our immediate knowledge that we are awake. In responding to those who demanded proof that we are awake and not dreaming, Aristotle responded, “They seek reasons for things for which there is no reason. For there is no demonstration of a principle of demonstration.” According to Williams, Scotus believes we have a similarly immediate knowledge of the truths of the moral law. Though they depend on logically prior facts, they are not known by logically prior facts but are both immediate and certain. “The *affectio iustitiae* cannot of course tell us that God has commanded a particular moral law; it is not a cognitive faculty. But given that God has commanded a moral law, he has created in us an inclination to follow that law.” (1995, sect. 4)

Williams immediately goes on to identify inclination with perception:

This inclination gives us a ‘*sense*’ of what is morally required of us, a sense utterly independent of the satisfaction of our desires or even the perfection of our nature as rational agents. In this way we have *immediate, non-discursive awareness that certain actions are right or wrong*. The moral law is indeed written on our ‘hearts,’ that is, on the affective, rather than the cognitive, part of the soul. (Williams 1995, sect. 4; emphases added)

Williams’ explanation of this “sense” leaves us with more questions than answers. Most obviously, the term is being used equivocally. Williams seems to be saying both that this “sense,” the *affectio iustitiae*, is a sensibility or inclination requiring direction through intellection, but also that it can spontaneously generate moral content. That the *affectio iustitiae* prescribes the moral law in and of itself I find completely implausible, even if this turns out to be Scotus’ own position, for at least four reasons. First, human nature is a part of the natural creation from which some natural lawyers believe we can “read” the moral law.⁸⁴ If intuitions concerning morality are perceived immediately and naturally, then the faculty that perceives them is an aspect of human nature that guides us in moral behavior. It is a feature of our nature that gives us the *content* of moral law, not contingently and simply as suiting the perfection of our being, but necessarily and immediately. So we are back to a law derivable from human nature and corresponding to the dictates of the second table, but without practical reasoning. Second, our intuitive perception of such moral demands is likely to be no less mysterious and problematic than the appeal to specific revelation that it is intended to obviate. It faces all the arguments typically mounted against claims of self-evident morality. In response to this sort of claim, J. Hare notes that morality

⁸⁴ Again, this is *not* the Aristotelian/Thomist understanding, advocated by MacIntyre, of how we derive the natural law from nature. It is not from human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be that we can derive the moral law, but from our grasp of human-nature-as-it-is-when-it-fulfills-its-potential. See Rhoneheimer (2000).

is not like perception. We do not wake up with a mistrust of our senses, but we do sometimes wake up without feeling the authority of moral demand. (2001, p. 55) Third, as Williams describes the sense, it is simply awareness, and therefore does not easily fit what Scotus says about the place of right reason in morality. Such an immediate awareness would not be a conclusion of practical rationality to will God's will for our willing. Fourth, we would then need an explanation of how God could command contrarily to this immediate cognition without violating right reason, as Scotus thinks God could have done. Such an explanation may be possible, but until it is provided, the notion of epistemic immediacy leaves more unanswered in Scotist moral theory than it explains.

Here is my take on what the *affectio iustitiae* is. Scotus says that apart from knowing that the first table of the Decalogue is part of the natural law strictly speaking, "principles which are necessarily grasped by any intellect understanding those terms" (e.g.: "Any being having the attributes of God must necessarily be loved."), we can know that other things are part of the natural law if they are "exceedingly harmonious" with what is known *per nota ex terminus*. What he says about this is mostly negative, as a reply to *Aquinas'* version of natural law. He draws an analogy to the relationship of the principles of positive law and actual codification. It does not necessarily follow from the requirement of civil order that private property be instituted. Even though because of corrupt human nature we tend to care more for our own property than for common property, and therefore common property could lead to conflict, and even though private property is quite consonant with the principle of civil order, it does not follow as a matter of necessity from that principle. (1997, p. 219f)

In the biblical traditions, the conclusions of natural law in its purest form are those derived in the state of humankind prior to the corruption of sin. What Scotus says here is vague and non-committal: "In the state of innocence also all were bound by these precepts,

which were either prescribed interiorly in the heart of everyone or perhaps by some teaching given exteriorly by God and passed on by parents to their children....” (1997, p. 207)

So in the absence of an unambiguous answer by Scotus, I propose the following solution instead. I have no reason to think that this is Scotus’s position, other than that it is more consistent with Scotus’s overall position than what Williams and others claim to be Scotus’s position.

The *affectio commodi* is specifically intended by Scotus to encompass Aquinas’ entire theory of the will, with regard both to the senses and to the intelligence. With regard to the Second Table, I think that Scotus’s position *is* Aquinas’s position. Scotus just doesn’t believe that Aquinas’s position is natural law in the strictest, metaphysically-necessary sense. Aquinas sees his theory of the will as providential. The senses are providential for (non-human) animals. Both the intelligence and the senses are providential for humans. As far as I can see, there is no reason for Scotus to disagree with the characterization of these faculties as providential, given that God has willed their flourishing. Scotus clearly implies as much. (1997, pp. 155ff.)

Furthermore, humans can *see* that the senses alone are providential for all animals, including humans, and that the senses and the intelligence are providential for rational beings. All other things being equal, our inclination toward flourishing does guide us as rational beings to an end that is harmonious with human excellences, vulnerabilities, and sociality. If it is the case that God wills human flourishing, then flourishing is just. Practical rationality then dictates conditions such as those protected in the Second Table in order to attain flourishing.

The *affectio iustitiae*—or the inclination that I believe Scotus points to in using this term—is that inclination to value, for example, the goods and excellences of human flourishing *for their contribution to justice* as an ideal or end, objectively, not simply because of personal or collective interest, if we have the conceptual resources to make this

distinction. We *do* perceive the harmony and suitability of human flourishing. We *are* naturally attracted to these ends. And in the absence of any reason to think otherwise, flourishing seems right. So the *affectio iustitiae* inclines us to the justice of flourishing as “a value, attribute, or option that is automatically supplied or assumed by the system or program when the user specifies no value.” Our “default setting” for morality, in other words, is for flourishing as just. Here I emphasize what Scotus says about the second table: it is not natural law *strictly speaking*—*per se notum ex terminus*—but only in the sense that it is fitting to our nature on the basis of our limited understanding of harmony and suitability. In the absence of a contravening direction concerning the good, we are justified in pursuing flourishing. Yet even here, we do not pursue it primarily for its own sake.

Three things, says Scotus, could draw us to God our final end. We could be drawn by love for the intrinsic worth of God as our end and purpose, even if we were not united with God. Here we are motivated by the desire for justice. Here we recognize that God is the ultimate good behind all things, regardless of our interests. Demonstrating the virtue of charity, this is love even if we, the lovers, were not benefited, to posit a counterfactual. This is the distinction between our contingent end, union with God, and our final and necessary end, the love of God as ultimate good. Our final end is to be co-lovers of God (with God), irrespective of our own benefit.

Or, second, we could be drawn to union with God. Or, third, we could be drawn by the “satisfaction” of *beatitudo*. All three motivations properly draw us to our final end. Each is a motivation toward a good. The first motivation is motivation for the ultimate good. (1997, p. 277)

In keeping with my theory as a whole, to sum up, my response to the question of how we know our obligations is as follows. First, rationality impels us to come to conclusions concerning the good life. (See chapter 6.) Second, we have a natural inclination to human

flourishing, the *affectio commodi*. Third, given our limited understanding of the way things are and the apparent level of suitability of our dispositions to our environment, we work from the “default setting” that our flourishing is just. But, fourth, we can distinguish between *our* good (our flourishing) and *the* good. In the Aristotelian conception through Aquinas, there is no conceptual space between *the* good and *our* good, either objectively or subjectively (God’s will or our response to it, on my account). There *is* such a distinction and the human structure of the will can make a corresponding distinction in *practical reasoning*, however, so on the basis of our understanding of what other theories might call the original position—the biblical conception of God and of God’s creative freedom—we can pursue our good as *just*, and not only as befitting our inclination to flourishing.

Practical differences

Mere intellection, over against sensation, does not allow for genuine moral freedom. Morality is not necessarily tied to *eudaimonia*, but is conceptually independent from human flourishing. Something like the two affections in the Scotist structure of the will, the ability to pursue justice separate from our interest in *eudaimonia* is essential to this understanding of morality. These are the claims I have made so far.

I have taken so much space in this argument to demonstrate the theoretical possibility of God’s willing, and our pursuing, a good at the realization of which the person will not be temporally present, consciously or bodily, in order to answer an obvious objection to the anti-eudaimonist claim. That obvious objection is that the anti-eudaimonist claim is incoherent. God could not require of us to will against our flourishing, goes the objection, either because to do so involves a contradiction at the level of God’s creative or legislative will, or because humans cannot fail to will their flourishing (which also amounts to a contradiction in the divine will). I have attempted to

show that no such contradiction follows from the anti-eudaimonist position.

Yet the instances in which we might understand God to have required humans to choose against our tendency toward flourishing are rare. Furthermore, they are controversial.⁸⁵ And as it turns out, I have claimed, God *does* will our flourishing—though freely, not necessarily. So for purposes of practical rationality, is the issue then moot? If there is a happy coincidence between God's will and our flourishing, why should we be concerned with the question at all? How much practical difference does this structural difference make with respect to morality?

Four sorts of practical differences emerge from the difference in the Scotist structure of morality: concerning the ultimate end of human life, concerning the virtues necessary to reach that end and the ends subordinate to that end, concerning individuality, and with respect to the range of goods for which this structure can give account.

The most important general difference between the eudaimonist and Scotist structures is in their respective conceptions of the good, both for the individual and for the community. Human flourishing is a great good. Indeed, it turns out to be the penultimate good. But that ranking relative to the good is all-important. If humans are creatures, then any human end must be understood, first of all, in terms of the Creator's intention. On the orthodox theistic traditions, humans are not only or primarily ends for their own sake, but are primarily for God's sake. Even if our end, penultimately, is to flourish, it is our end because it is God's will. God does not will our flourishing because it is, antecedently, our end. Our *ultimate* end is God and the purposes stipulated by God, not flourishing. The most important difference

⁸⁵ In the end, God did *not* require Abraham to sacrifice his son. So does the classic biblical example of theological voluntarism, even as accepted by both Aquinas and Scotus, unambiguously support my claim? What God was actually up to is debatable, at the least, though I think that the Scotist argument presents fewer problems than does the Thomist.

between eudaimonism and my theory, then, is precisely the respective place of God's intentions for the ultimate end of human existence, an end that transcends social flourishing.

The subsequent question then is how this difference is reflected in moral psychology. Eudaimonist practical rationality, strictly speaking, is directed toward the lesser good of human flourishing. Morality depends on right rationality and right rationality, as MacIntyre notes, requires distinguishing between types of goods: instrumental goods, "goods for their own sake," and goods that are appropriate to particular circumstances and lives. (1999, pp. 66f.)

On the Augustinian understanding to which I subscribe, evil does not represent a dualistic counterpart to good, but is rather a diminution of the good. All things have a basic non-moral goodness by virtue of their existence. Evil is not an opposing entity, but is instead a weakening of that goodness, much as "darkness" is defined by the absence of light (to the lower limit of the absence of all light), and "cold" is defined by the absence of heat (to the lower limit of absolute zero, the absence of all heat). It is in building on Augustine's insight here that Hannah Arendt develops her concept of the "banality of evil." (Arendt 1964; Elshtain 1995, pp. 69-87) Contrary to a popular misconception, evil is not a negative excellence, but is rather a misuse of excellences that diminishes them. Evil is not and cannot be the constructive will of a negative entity in a dualistic scheme. Evil is rather the will directed toward some good of an inferior rank, despite the resultant harm done in the depreciation of the good of superior rank.⁸⁶ To will the penultimate good above the ultimate good is to will an evil. It is the desire for the fulfillment of human potential as an end in itself that is realized in the story of Babel/Babylon, the idolization of the human.

⁸⁶ It is through this insight that Anselm can explain the possibility of the fall of Satan in the absence of any prior evil. It was because Lucifer willed his own good above God. (Anselm 2000, p. 227)

If my demonstration is valid and cogent, then despite his recognition that obtaining-the-end is not the end, Aquinas' theory of the will does not have the conceptual resources to allow the agent to pursue the end (God), but only to pursue the attainment-of-the-end (flourishing/*beatitudo/eudaimonia*). Since on his model *our* good, strictly speaking, is attainment-of-the-end, not the end itself, it is our good that we seek. It is only this penultimate end that is the full actualization of the agent, according to eudaimonism, not her ultimate end. Ironically, if I am correct, we cannot achieve the good by pursuing attainment-of-the-good, so this pursuit is vain.⁸⁷

This difference communicates a corresponding difference in the virtues. The dispositions necessary for human flourishing "for its own sake" are not the virtues of human flourishing for God's sake. In the case of courage, for example, each disposition is defective courage, not genuine courage, in light of the other. Eudaimonist courage is not the courage that the Scotist structure demands. Eudaimonist courage is a simulacrum of Scotist courage because its motivation and end are not the good life and *the* good as distinguishable from flourishing. Likewise, Scotist courage is also a simulacrum of eudaimonist courage, though for a different sort of reason. Eudaimonism says that it is rationally impossible to fail to will one's flourishing and therefore sees purported Scotist courage as involving some form of self-deception. One or the other of two deficiencies in strictly-applied Scotist moral psychology is the case. Either the agent is *aware* that she is *actually* seeking *eudaimonia*, even though she says she is not, and her courage is thereby tainted by pretense. Or, she merely *thinks*

⁸⁷ Although I want to insist on the importance of this difference, the corollary of previous observations that "good" requires a larger frame of reference, there is a paradox here concerning human flourishing. The paradox is that human life can achieve its highest powers only in pursuit of ends not limited by the common human good. It is the difference between a self that is limited by an anthropocentric view of its nature, and one that by attachment to what is outside its own nature transcends anthropocentric limits in the pursuit of goods not based in self. To pursue flourishing as our ultimate end is to limit its realization. It is only in pursuing goods because of their relationship to *the* good that we can attain the full measure of our own potential.

that she is pursuing disinterested justice when she is actually pursuing *eudaimonia*, and her courage is thereby tainted by ignorance and by a defective self-sacrifice. So on a eudaimonist picture, Scotist courage is deficient either because it entails something like false humility, or because it entails ignorance of what ought to be at stake, much like the ignorance that makes foolhardiness a false form of courage.⁸⁸ The virtues of each theory are not genuine virtues to the other.

In affirming that Scotism gives the better explanation, I do not at all mean to imply of course that all Thomists, for example, are only apparently virtuous. Rather, based on my description of the two accounts, my claim is twofold. First, the Scotist structure more adequately accounts for human powers and excellences than does the eudaimonist structure. It explains better than the eudaimonist structure can do what we know of the best human behavior. And, second, the Scotist structure and *telos*, strictly followed, promotes a more genuinely virtuous character than the eudaimonist structure can do, strictly followed. So the practical differences between the two at this point are not derived from what self-proclaimed eudaimonists may actually do, but from what they or anyone *would* do if they were strictly following the eudaimonist model with its differences in end, motivation, and means. And what they would do is only that which contributes to an end in which they can foresee themselves as present and flourishing. The difference I am suggesting can be described simplistically as the difference between advantage and justice. The difference is the conditionality, imposed by eudaimonist limits of the will, on any action or disposition. I am positing the ability, unavailable to the eudaimonist theory, of transcending the interests of our own flourishing. If some version of the Scotist account is correct, the human will can reflect or replicate the divine will in willing our final end for its own sake.

⁸⁸ See MacIntyre's reference to the "vice" of self-sacrifice in *Dependent Rational Animals*. (1999, p.160)

A third category of differences arises from the eudaimonistic dependence of all goods on human flourishing. If our motivation is dependent on human flourishing, then goods can only be counted as goods as a function of their contribution to the human good. Anything that does not contribute to human flourishing cannot be considered a good. The pursuit of the flourishing of non-human species and of the non-human environment in general, for example, can be rationally justified only on the basis of its contribution to human flourishing.

To the contrary, I question that what is due to other species depends *solely* on their contribution to human flourishing. It is estimated that 99.5 percent of all species that have ever existed became extinct before the human era. It seems quite probable then that thousands of species of life in the universe have come into existence and passed into extinction without any trace that will ever be perceived by humans. Eudaimonism does not have ready resources for appreciating these goods.

The fourth practical difference concerns individuality. Because the possible routes to union with God are innumerable, only our final end limits diversity and uniqueness. And that diversity will be fully rational in every instance. To be sure, this will not be the diversity and uniqueness of, say, philosophical liberalism. It *just is* the uniqueness of God's will for each one. Nevertheless, this will provides the best basis, I believe, for genuine individuality.

The perspective of theological voluntarism is a perspective antecedent to any ordinance of creation, any divine commitment to human welfare as seen fully in the incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection and continued work of Jesus Christ. Prior to these, none of the human inclinations and harmonious ends in themselves constitutes a reason for God to will human natural flourishing. God has knowledge of all possible worlds and all counterfactuals. Using Scotus' language, God

knows what is possibly “suitable” or “harmonious” (*conveniens*) to our nature according to other ends than those to which we have become accustomed. Just as it was a mistake in the natural sciences to focus on final causes and to try to deduce from them what is “best” in nature, rather than proceeding inductively and empirically, so too it is a mistake to think that the harmony and suitability to human nature that we perceive are the only ones possible. God remains free to do anything consistent with God’s overall intentions, intentions not known to us antecedently with certainty. We do not know that God could not will other than a straight-line route to our final end. Because of the inclination Scotus called the *affectio iustitiae*, we are free to respond to that override and recognize it as just contrary to our “default setting.” Unlike non-human animals or even hypothetical beings that do not have an inclination to see justice done, we can will something above our own flourishing.⁸⁹

In the concluding chapter I would like to offer a more formal and concise explanation of what all this says about the identity of obligation.

⁸⁹ “Ought” implies “can,” but “can” does not mean “without divine enabling.” See J. Hare (1996).

THE NATURE OF MORAL OBLIGATION

One of the most problematic features of moral philosophy in the context of modernity is how rival traditions can speak to each other. Much of natural law theory is an attempt at “moral Esperanto.” (Stout’s (1988) expression on a somewhat different subject) For reasons given throughout this thesis, I think the project is no more likely to succeed than the ability to find a vestigial core of all languages. But if these efforts fail, then theological voluntarists might be thought to be completely at a loss to explain the nature of obligation in a way that ensures that they and their rivals are even discussing the same topic.

Eric D’Arcy objects to divine command morality because he thinks that it implies that only people having religious knowledge can have moral knowledge.

[F]or if immoral actions are immoral merely because God so wills it, merely because God legislates against them, it would be sheer coincidence if someone who knew nothing of God or his law happened to adopt the same views about particular actions as God did.

(D’Arcy 1973, p. 194)

If only those with religious knowledge have moral knowledge, then what those without religious take for obligation is only coincidentally obligatory. So any discussion between the two parties about obligation might seem to resemble a comedy of errors more than true moral discussion. Phillip Quinn (2000) offers a reply to this objection. I find Quinn’s rebuttal unconvincing, but it serves as a helpful introduction to asking and answering basic questions concerning theological voluntarism (TV). On the basis of the preceding arguments, I respond

to three standard questions concerning theological voluntarism in this chapter:

Which moral statuses depend on divine acts?

On which divine acts are these moral statuses dependent?

What is this relation of dependence between moral statuses and the divine acts that they depend on?

I argue here that obligation is dependent on divine communicated intentions, and that this relationship of dependence is one of reduction: the concept of obligation could be dispensed of in favor of divine communicated intentions. This theory does not preclude discussion of obligation across rival traditions. Though we are disputing its identity, we are generally pointing at the same thing.

Phillip Quinn's is a *causation* version of TV, a version claiming that divine intentions *bring it about* that certain things are morally obligatory. "It makes no claims in moral epistemology," Quinn says, "and so it makes no claims about how we might come to know what God's antecedent intentions are." It is consistent with his position, Quinn maintains, that moral agents first learn what is obligatory, as effect, and only subsequently discover the cause of this obligation (God's action), much as we often proceed from effects to causes in other spheres of knowledge. "It is not a consequence of our theory that only people who have religious knowledge can have moral knowledge." So then is the knowledge that something is morally obligatory just coincidental? That depends on the explanation of the agreement, Quinn claims. "An explanation available to theological voluntarists is that God has benevolently endowed normal human creature with a moral faculty such as conscience that... reliably tracks, unbeknownst to those who know nothing of God, divine antecedent intentions." (2000, p. 67)

The problem with this response is that it runs afoul of Quinn's explanation of the causation of obligation. According to Quinn, God's action is the total, exclusive, active, immediate, and necessary cause of something's being obligatory.

By totality, I mean that what does the bringing about is the total cause of what is brought about. By exclusivity, I mean that *what does the bringing about is the sole cause of what is brought about*. By activity, I mean that what does the bringing about does so in virtue of the exercise of some activity. By immediacy, I mean that what does *the bringing about causes what is brought about immediately rather than by means of secondary causes* or instruments. And by necessity, I mean that what does the bringing about necessitates what is brought about. (2000, p. 55; emphases added)

In other terms, God is therefore by unspecified means the *efficient* cause of an obligatory state of affairs.⁹⁰ I see a dilemma for Quinn's causation TV in this attempt to respond to D'Arcy's objection. In the first place, since conscience need not be linked to divine intentions in the mind of the moral agent, it seems to make our perception of obligation a freestanding and mysterious perception without rational explanation. Surely it cannot be that either the *feeling* or the *intuition* of obligation, say, is a sufficient indicator of obligation. What is often labeled conscience, but is unaided by reason, does *not* reliably track morality. We often *feel* obligated without good reasons for thinking we are actually obligated, such as when we have the compulsion to answer a ringing payphone in a crowded airport. We might also have intuitions leading us to believe that something is obligatory, without

⁹⁰ The relationship between what Aristotle terms a final "cause" and the realization of the result or end of which it is the "cause" *parallels* that of efficient cause and effect. Contrary to Quinn, I say that a communicated divine intention does not, however, have the *same* relationship to obligation as an efficient cause has to its effect. A communicated divine intention is not, that is, the efficient cause of obligation.

reasons and without *feeling* one way or another about it. By the same token, a person might not feel obliged to do, or believe that she is obliged to do, what she is in fact under obligation to do.

To justify the dictates of feelings or intuitions as correct, we must give reasons distinguishable from those feelings or intuitions: “It seems to me that such-and-such is obligatory, but *why* should I believe that it is actually obligatory?” The reasons given in answer to this question must correspond to the ultimate source of authority according to the proposed theory. Quinn says (causation) TV can forgo this explanation.

In other spheres of knowledge, we might forego discerning cause from effect, because the effect functions in our lives without knowing the cause. I can use my mobile phone with no real understanding of the causes that bring about the effects I enjoy. But if obligation requires rational justification for its force, and if God efficiently *causes* obligation in the way Quinn claims, then how could obligation obtain without my understanding what brings it about? If Quinn’s theory of causation were correct, it would be a rational error to believe the dictates of conscience to be obligatory without *knowing* that conscience tracks the divine antecedent intentions that are themselves the actual cause of obligation. An appeal to the conscience merely adds another level of justification. It lacks an explanation for a positive relationship of conscience to authority—in this case, to the authority of divine actions. Quinn is mistaken in trying to separate explanation from practical rationality.

Yet to provide a rational explanation of obligation of the sort that I say is required is to throw Quinn’s theory onto the other horn of the dilemma, D’Arcy’s criticism. Causation TV thus explained would entail that only those with religious knowledge have non-coincidental knowledge of obligations. Non-coincidental knowledge would require knowing about this supposed relationship between obligation, conscience and divine authority.

On the reduction version of TV that I advocate, to concede the existence of rational persons without any knowledge either of God or of God's law would amount only to the concession of the existence of persons without knowledge of the underlying *structure* of morality. If my theory is correct, D'Arcy's objection is just as effective, or ineffective, against TV as it is against any other theory of morality purportedly correct, but of which someone might be ignorant. If utilitarianism were correct, for instance, and I didn't know that the happiness principle (or whatever) was the criteria of morality, then any true beliefs I held about moral obligation would be coincidental.⁹¹

Now I'll locate my theory among possible versions of TV.

Three questions

Theological voluntarism makes the claim that the divine will is relevant to the evaluative status of various entities. The focus of our attention here is moral statuses. Phillip Quinn has framed the question according to the claim that some moral status is in some way dependent on some divine act. (The schema of the question is: "(S) Moral status M stands in dependency relation D to divine act A." (2000, p. 53)) A case for TV must then respond to three questions: Which moral statuses? Which divine acts? What is the relation of dependence? Mark Murphy (2002b, sect. 2) has expanded on Quinn's analysis. Although my conclusions differ from Murphy's—he opposes TV and offers a natural law version of morality, while my theory begins with natural law based on divine nature and argues for a TV based on that law—the following owes much to Murphy's fine analysis.

⁹¹ Quinn makes a similar observation to show that D'Arcy's objection can apply broadly to any theory the workings of which were unknown to non-adherents of that theory. But for the reasons just given, and contrary to Quinn's reply, D'Arcy's objection is uniquely effective against causation TV.

Which moral statuses are dependent on divine acts?

The question of which moral statuses depend on divine acts can be broadened to ask which *normative* statuses, or even which *evaluative* statuses depend on God's will. The broader the claim, the harder the claim is to defend. (Murphy 2002b, sect. 3.2) It would be absurd to contend that divine goodness is a function of divine will. As I argued earlier (chap. 7), only God is good in the way that God is good: originally, not derivatively. God cannot be other than good, nor can God's acts, notably God's creative acts, be other than good. On the theory I am advancing, neither God's goodness nor the goodness of God's acts themselves is dependent on God's will. With regard to the basic end of human existence and subsequently to the requisite basic human disposition, then, neither is a function of divine will. We must love God, just as God must love God. The shape and content of the right human response to that divine goodness is a matter of divine discretion, but its basic orientation is not.⁹² My theological voluntarism does not therefore portray a God that is "nothing but will."

Human civil authority is constrained by the dictates of justice in the pursuit of the common good in the way that Aquinas outlined. Aquinas bases his theory of moral law in the *Summa Theologica* in the concept of the Eternal Law, which he identified with the person of God. From the Eternal Law are derived divine law (specific revelation) and natural law. From natural law (and from divine law for those societies that have access to it), we derive human law (positive law). Positive law is the contingent rational means chosen and promulgated by a given community in its particular circumstances to achieve its common good. Aquinas was careful to stipulate that human law is only valid if it is just, that is, if it reflects the dictates of natural

⁹² God could not without contradiction will antecedently that rational creatures hate God. Humans are created with the capacity to love their own good more than they love God (and the reverse). To create a being antecedently intended to hate God would be to create a being that denied the goodness of God, and therefore to will a denial of this unchangeable truth concerning God's nature, and therefore to will an evil.

law (or revealed divine law, or both) in pursuit of the common good. Suppose that the common good includes public order and preservation of life. Reflecting the dictates of practical reason, then, human law will formulate particular traffic laws, for example, to secure those goods. In *this* respect, the difference between the Thomist and Scotist accounts are a question of degree. There is a natural law at work in both, but in the Scotist account it is predicated on the nature of God, specifically on the goodness of God, not on human nature.

It is the moral statuses of the “obligation family” that concern us at present: rightness, wrongness, and permissibility. It is the specification of *how* we are to love God that is dependent on divine action and it is that specification that creates specific obligation.

On which divine acts is obligation dependent?

Obligation depends on the communicated intentions of a practical authority, I claim. That is, obligation depends on the successful transmission of the content of a practical authority’s intention to a receiver. As Adams notes, the picture of an obligation that cannot be normally perceived, such as through an uncommunicated intention, is unattractive. (Cited in Quinn 2000) Beyond its unappealing picture of divine-human relationships, there seems to be no rational reason to expect someone to know what s/he has no reason to know. On the other hand, there are many uncontroversial obligations that are not explicit. My wife should not have to tell me that cultivating a good relationship with her entails certain acts and dispositions on my part.

There are, moreover, obligations that we *ought* to perceive that we do not perceive. If I park my car in a clearly-marked fire lane, but I do not see the signs, my obligation not to park there persists, even though I did not know that I was under obligation not to park there. A responsible driver is attentive to such matters. Similarly, if I visit a foreign country whose laws are different from my home country, I am under obligation to inform myself on the local legal conventions, even

if there are no signs telling me, say, to drive on the left. If I am sanctioned for failing to do so, my ignorance is no excuse, as the local judiciary will tangibly help me to understand.

This position is more than prudential, though it is that. (Otherwise laws would be unenforceable on the willfully ignorant.) Every one of us does not know things that s/he should know. We hide things from ourselves through self-deception. And we are genuinely unaware of obligations that we would know if we had fulfilled prior obligations. A child may have emotional problems that her father should redress, but of which he is unaware because he has spent too little time with her. We should know things that we may have no way of knowing consequent to our ethical failings.⁹³

By contending therefore that obligation depends on divine intentions, those that make the claim need not necessarily attribute to God the irrationality with which such a picture initially presents us, since there may be good reasons to think that we should know what we do not in fact know. Nevertheless, my theory requires only conclusions concerning intentions as actually perceived.

What is the relation of dependence?

Mark Murphy (2002a; 2002b) has expanded on Quinn's (2000) categorization of four relations of dependence in TV. I will briefly summarize the first three (causation, analysis, and supervenience) and then describe my version of the fourth (reduction) in more detail.

⁹³ This phenomenon may go much deeper than these examples indicate. A family of tourists was vacationing on a Thai beach in 2004 when an earthquake took place. The young daughter remembered details from a science lesson on earthquakes and tsunamis and so urgently warned her parents that the family was in danger. They in turn warned others, and several hundred lives were saved when thousands of others died. It is unlikely that she was the only person on that beach or on all the other beaches in the region that had ever learned these details. In a related point, it was reported that almost no non-human animals were killed in the Asian tsunami. Non-human animals often sense natural disasters that humans do not. Given the moral difference between humans and other animals, it seems at least plausible that our moral state is a contributing

As noted above, the *causation* version of TV claims that God causes moral obligation. (See Quinn 2000.) In addition to my objection concerning causation and conscience noted above, there are two other objections to causation TV that have not been adequately answered to date.

On the causation version of TV, it is obligatory for human agent A to ϕ only because God wills it to be obligatory. It is God's willing it to be obligatory that brings about the obligation.⁹⁴ This position might easily be confused with other versions of TV. Note that *its being obligatory for A to ϕ* cannot be identical to *God's willing that (it be obligatory for A to ϕ)*, on pain of infinite regress. (2002b, sect. 2.3)

But if *its being morally obligatory to ϕ* is distinct from *God's commanding/intending ϕ -ing*, then how precisely does God's commanding/intending us to ϕ *cause* ϕ -ing to be obligatory? As Murphy notes, there cannot be, for example, a prior obligation to obey God, since God supposedly causes all obligatory states. (Murphy 2002b, sect. 2.4)

This leads to the second objection. Despite its claims, causation TV also seems to have a problem concerning authority. It doesn't make God a practical authority. Although God causes obligation, the subsequent reason for the agent to act is that it is obligatory to ϕ , not as a response to God's authority. This undercuts some of the most important motivations behind TV in the theistic tradition; causation TV does not make divine command/intentions even partly *constitutive* of obligation. (Murphy 2002b, sect. 2.4)

Robert Adams, a central figure in the revival of TV, once claimed that the morally obligatory should be *analyzed* as being commanded by

factor—along with important non-moral factors, to be sure—to our ignorance of many obligations we have.

⁹⁴ The symbol " ϕ " is a variable that stands for some action verb such as "go," "speak," "see," etc., including prohibitions ("do not go," "do not speak," etc.).

God. (1973) Since *Euthyphro*, discussions of TV have often been framed in the synthetic/analytic dichotomy. On an analytic understanding, “ ϕ -ing is obligatory” is analyzed as “God has willed/commanded ϕ -ing.” One problem for such a claim is the unavoidable implication that people inside and outside of the monotheistic communities of discourse have never genuinely *disagreed* concerning moral obligation, because they do not mean the same thing when they say, “ ϕ -ing is obligatory.” A non-theist can say, “ ϕ -ing is not obligatory.” She does not mean, “God has not commanded ϕ -ing.” A theological voluntarist following an analytic form of TV could not intelligibly distinguish the two assertions and therefore could not precisely disagree with her. Moral discourse between such communities is therefore not genuine moral discourse. A corollary problem for analytic forms of TV is that many thoughtful and otherwise masterful language-users *within* religious communities of discourse do not use “obligatory” (right, wrong, permissible) in this way. In fact, those inside and outside theistic communities of discourse apparently *do* disagree sometimes about whether “obligatory” applies to some state of affairs under consideration. Analytic TV therefore does not capture something necessary.

It is primarily for this reason that Adams has moved from an analysis form of TV (1973) to a reduction form of TV (1979), to the contentions of which I will come in an instant.

Supervenience TV makes the claim that obligation and divine commands/intentions are co-extensive. Unfortunately, it seems to be caught between the failures of causation and analysis. Murphy points out that the relation of dependence between divine commands/intentions and obligations must fall under one of two conditions. Supervenience TV may make obligations wholly *distinct* from divine commands/intentions. Or it must make divine commands/intentions partially *constitutive* of obligations: a divine commands/intention plus some extra state of affairs constitutes an

obligation. Both positions are untenable. If supervenience TV takes obligations to be wholly distinct from obligation, then it takes on the problems of causation TV. God is not an authority, since God's commands do not provide a reason for action. If supervenience TV takes divine commands/intentions as partially constitutive, we have to explain how the part that is constitutive *is* constitutive. (Murphy 2000b, sect. 2.4)⁹⁵

The claim that divine commands/intentions are *wholly* constitutive of obligations in some way is the claim of *analysis* and *reductive* versions of TV. *Reduction* TV claims that the concept of obligation is dispensable in favor of divine commands/intentions. Human obligations *just are* whatever God dictates (with the exception of the basic obligation toward God as ultimate good, the only dictate of natural law *per se nota ex terminis*). The idea is that the use of "obligation" is neutral between theists and nontheists, but that the best candidate for "obligation" (rightness, wrongness, permissibility) is the objective property of actions being commanded/intended by God.

Adams (1979) draws on papers by Donnellan (1966 and 1972), Kripke (1972), and Putnam (1975a, pp. 196-290). The Kripke/Putnam theory is difficult and complex. I draw here only on a few of its insights for my purposes.

In the central illustration proposed by Putnam (1975b), we imagine the existence of another world, Twin Earth, identical in every way, save one, to our world. In Twin Earth there is a transparent, odorless, colorless liquid that its English-speaking inhabitants call "water." The Twin Earth liquid functions as H₂O does in our world as a solvent,

⁹⁵ I mention the supervenience theory only to signal a distinction between it and the way supervenience emerges in the Scotus/John Hare theory of supervenience. Murphy's understanding of supervenience follows Jaegwon Kim's (1993) *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). The Scotus/Hare understanding of supervenience is *not* supervenience as the term is used in the philosophy of mind. (J. Hare 2001, p. 63)

agent of biological hydration, and so forth. The liquid is not H₂O, however, but a chemical abbreviated, say, as XYZ.⁹⁶

Would we be correct to say that XYZ is water? No, we would not, because water is identical to the properties of the chemical H₂O.

Water = H₂O and non-H₂O is not water. Names and natural-kind terms (what we call water in our world, for example) are “rigid designators” (Kripke 1972) so that both of these identity statements concerning water, if true, are necessarily true in all possible worlds.

Even inhabitants of our world 300 years ago (before the discoveries needed to identify water as H₂O) would have been wrong if they had learned of that alien world and had believed that that alien liquid was water. If there is a hidden structure of a natural kind, it is that structure that determines what it is to be a member of the natural kind. Whether we have discovered its hidden structure or not, the nature of what we in our world call water—according to our best account so far, it is H₂O—is the same in all possible worlds.

One implication of this observation is that terms such as “water” are not therefore precisely *synonymous* with any description we happen to have at the time. As in the case of the example of our forebears of 300 years ago, it could turn out upon further discovery that the *nature of what we point at* with our description turns out not to be what our description said it was. Although we use operational definitions, and must do so, they are not analytically true of what they index. Criteria are not necessary and sufficient conditions for identity, but are only our best approximations of entities that exist independently of our theories.

⁹⁶ Compare this fictive chemical with “heavy water” which has the same structure as water, except that the hydrogen atoms are isotopes of hydrogen called “deuterium,” and has practically all the same properties as water. It is a “form of water in which the hydrogen atoms of mass 1 (¹H) ordinarily present in water are replaced by deuterium (symbol D or ²H), the heavy stable isotope of hydrogen of mass 2. The molecular formula of heavy water is D₂O (or ²H₂O).” (Katz 2006)

The application for the present purposes will be evident. Our identification of terms like *obligation* (rightness, wrongness, permissibility) follows these same lines. “Being wrong” is identical, according to reduction theological voluntarists, to “being contrary to the commands/intentions of God” even though they do not mean the same. The claim is not that “This is wrong” is *analyzed* as “This is contrary to the commands/intentions of God.” Rather, the claim is that the hidden structure of the obligation to ϕ turns out to be that God commands/intends ϕ -ing as a means to unity with God, and so the obligation to ϕ can be conceptually reduced to God’s commanding/intending ϕ -ing. Utilitarians, Platonists, Marxists, and eudaimonists each contend that the structure of obligation to ϕ (if it is actually an obligation) is identical with some criteria flowing from *their* theory of value. We can genuinely disagree (and agree) about what is obligatory, while the nature of obligation remains under contention.

Objections to reduction TV

Mark Murphy claims that reduction TV is disanalogous to the identification of properties and hidden structures as reduction forms of TV have compared it the example of water. The identity of water with H₂O is *a posteriori*, he says, whereas the identification of obligation with commanded-by-God is *a priori*. Water plays its practical role in our lives whether or not we know that it is H₂O or not. If theological voluntarists are correct, the obligatory cannot play its role in our practical lives if we do not know that it is identical with “commanded by God.” It is not just an “interesting extra fact,” as is the knowledge that water is H₂O, but the very key to understanding morality. “No unintelligibility creeps into the life of agents that do not grasp that water is H₂O; unintelligibility creeps into the life of agents that do not grasp that the morally obligatory is commanded by God.” (Murphy 2002b, sect. 2.4)

I disagree with the assertion that the identification of divine communicated intentions, for example, with obligation is *a priori*. While it is true from the self-revelation claimed by the biblical God that this God's commands are uniquely authoritative, this conceptual picture is not one that can be gained without the experience of knowing the biblical account. The creator God is known only through self-revelation, and the evidence for this claim is historical: no other Ancient Near Eastern creation myth approximates the *ex nihilo* and *in nihilum* account of Genesis. (Contrast with the myths recorded in Pritchard 1958.) This would seem to make the reduction identification of divine commands with obligation a necessary (in all possible worlds) *a posteriori* (knowable only from the experience of revelation) truth.

Murphy's objection also leverages a degree of imprecision with respect to a practical difference in Putnam's Twin Earth example. Murphy's claim that the identity of water makes no difference to our practical lives assumes that we actually have accurate knowledge of the properties of water. While this is true with regard to the uses most of us make of the liquid most of the time, it is not true with regard to the ways in which the hidden structure of water does affect our practical lives. Imagine a society that believes that water, in addition to its functions as a solvent, a thirst-quencher, fire extinguisher, and so forth, has the property of divinity. For reasons dependent on this belief, no one in that society ever intentionally attempts to enter corporally into the local river in order to move through the water using their limbs. There is not even a word for "swimming" in their language. Consequently, fishermen and others sometimes accidentally drown. In such a case, the identity of water as (merely) H₂O would make a great deal of practical difference to their lives.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Among some West African ethnic groups, spirits are believed to *inhabit* bodies of water, with consequences similar to those in my example. I am not aware of any actual system of belief that takes water to *be* uniquely divine.

We take this hypothetical society's belief to be in error about the identity of water, but the argument can easily be adapted to a correct understanding of its identity (on our best account). The knowledge that water is H₂O makes a great deal of practical difference in predicting how water will behave under conditions that may not occur in many common uses of water. Plants and animals watered only with deuterium, for example, die prematurely. If we didn't know that water is H₂O, and that non-H₂O is not water, we could not make accurate predictions about its behavior.

Putnam's example of Twin Earth stipulated a chemical that functions exactly as our water does on Earth in order to show that it is nonetheless *not* water, but rather Twin Earthian "water," that is, XYZ. The objection raised by Murphy trades on this example at precisely the point where it cannot be taken as an actual possibility, at the point where XYZ does *not* function just like H₂O. No chemical compound functions *exactly* like another. If, on a perfect understanding of its properties, XYZ functioned exactly as does H₂O on a perfect understanding of *its* properties, then there would be no reason to think that there was any difference between the two, except in nomenclature. We would have to conclude instead that the distinction in nomenclature, the formula "XYZ", was mistaken. There is no difference without a difference. On a perfect understanding, *something* would enable us to distinguish H₂O from XYZ and that something would have some practical implication, even if for most practical purposes the difference were not important.

Similarly, and perhaps to push the Twin Earthian analogy beyond its usefulness, the function of obligation is not *entirely* dependent on knowing its identity, as the introduction to this chapter showed. True, those who do not know/recognize that obligation *just is* the property *being God's communicated intentions* do not use the term with full mastery. Nevertheless there are some respects in which the proper identification of obligation is not required in order for the term to play its role in our practical lives. If specific behaviors and dispositions are

correctly believed to be obligatory, even without knowledge that *being God's communicated intentions* is the property that makes them obligatory, much social and public order can be maintained, many negative personal consequences avoided, and many materially beneficial habits formed.⁹⁸

If we seek to understand the concept and force of obligation, we proceed inductively, looking for a theory that can explain our experience. We assume that some actions/intentions/dispositions are obligatory and others are not and that, to a large extent, we know which is which. As a theory is formed, however, it will turn out that some actions/intentions/dispositions we previously considered to be obligatory are not obligatory, and vice versa, and that some actions/intentions we believed were obligatory are indeed obligatory, but for quite different reasons than those we first believed. This observation applies broadly to the argument in favor of TV over against eudaimonism. A person's initial inclinations are solely compulsions directed toward *his/her* good. Through a process of transformation these are expanded to include a broader good. Adams makes the case that obligation is necessarily social. (1999, pp. 252f) If s/he comes by some means to accept premises and arguments such as those put forward in my previous chapters—I cannot advance a theory here about how this might happen—then s/he will see that the hidden structure of *obligation* is the property of *being God's communicated intentions*.

I have previously denied that we can know final causes with certainty. (See chapter 7.) Furthermore, the concept itself is controversial, as of course is the concept of God and divine intentions that I advance in its place. But it seems clear from all that I have argued to this point that

⁹⁸ Murphy notes that reduction TV, if true, returns us to the observation made by Anscombe (1958) that the concept of obligation is inherently theological. (2002b, sect. 2.4) He does not weigh in on Anscombe's proposal that the Aristotelian project be revived. But if my argument to this point is compelling, that project has not succeeded in making morality less theologically/metaphysically dependent.

we cannot forego hypotheses concerning whatever holds this conceptual place.

The “default setting” of human flourishing, as I posited in the last chapter, leads us to perceive obligations through practical rationality concerning goods understood as constitutive of *the* good. Through the processes of childhood socialization and participation in communal life, we come to some minimal conception or other of how life ought to be, and of the goods that make up that life. In my first several chapters on MacIntyre concerning practices, life narratives, and communal traditions I gave many examples. Goods are innumerable and allow of innumerable permutations in ranking. Evils are the pursuits of one good inordinately, to the detriment of other, higher-ranking goods. To tie obligations to the pursuit of goods provides little direction in moral decision-making therefore, since no one pursues evils as evils. The conception of the good is therefore determinative, once again.⁹⁹

To summarize then, all human obligations other than those stipulating love of God’s basic goodness are dependent on divine acts. That relation of dependence is one of reduction. Apart from those obligations to love God, obligation turns out to be reducible to the property of *being God’s communicated intentions*.

Conclusion

God created everything, without antecedent raw material, context or remainder. An artist constructs an artifact with some purpose in mind. To know what the object is, we must know what it is for, why it was made. But intentions are difficult to discern. MacIntyre makes a powerful case in *After Virtue* for the necessity of narrative in

⁹⁹ I emphasize the Augustinian and Reformed position concerning the negative role of our conclusions of practical rationality in moral education. As MacIntyre recognizes, “The central human experience of the natural law...is our inability to live by it...” (1988, p. 205)

discerning the intelligibility of actions. (204-225) This observation can be extrapolated to a larger frame of reference. A narrative is an *explicit* written or oral recounting of a story. It is a text communicating a sequence of events that form a meaningful pattern. The text establishes the meaning. Given a sufficiently objective and tightly controlled perspective from which to view events—such as the spectator’s view in a play or film—we can sometimes discern intent without explicit information. Even here, however, a director is often forced to add voice-over narrative for the sake of clarity. And in real life, to interpret actions without verbal explanation is to court trouble. We lack the perspective necessary for discerning the purposes of human life taken as a whole. Our end cannot be grasped by *a priori* reasoning.

It is for this reason that the Christian traditions have affirmed that the ultimate purpose and end of human existence cannot be known apart from revelation. My final end is external not only to myself, but also to society. Why then should I think that my *nature* can be adequately known apart from revelation?

If my interpretation of the biblical account is approximately correct, then it is difficult to know what to make of the search for reasons to comply with God’s communicated intentions other than this God’s creative power and goodness. If God really exists, there is something nonsensical about saying, in effect, “I can give reasons for compliance with your dictates that do not depend on your intentions as basic.” There is something at least as strange in taking these purported reasons as the rational basis for obeying this God’s commands. A denial of divine prerogative in God’s purposes is implicit in the demand for such reasons. Yet this is what moral philosophers do when they demand reasons independent of God for obedience to God.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ These comments closely parallel Lesslie Newbigin’s comments on *theoretical* authority and natural *theology*. (Newbigin 1996, p. 6)

From the perspective of the biblical traditions, the story of secular moral philosophy is a story of failure. There are many sources of this failure. The responsibility cannot all be laid at the feet of the Enlightenment. Many of the contributing influences are more sociological than conceptual. (See, for example, Berger 1974; 1990; Wells 1993) Were I capable of telling the whole story from the vantage point of intellectual history, however, I would emphasize the departure from the claims to authority offered by the biblical text.¹⁰¹ It might turn out that this text is not what it claims to be. But the claims of *this* text to authority cannot be established on bases that question its authority. It treats God's communicated intentions as practically authoritative. If this God really exists, then no more foundational answer to the question, "How should we live?" can be found than in the communicated intentions of this God.

¹⁰¹ Contrast Thomas Halyburton's position (1798) with MacIntyre's treatment of it in MacIntyre's account of the Scottish Enlightenment (1988, pp. 243-247).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Robert Merrihew (1981) "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness" in *Divine Commands and Morality* ed. Paul Helm (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Adams, Robert Merrihew (1999) *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (Oxford, OUP).
- Alejandro, Robert (1996) "What is Political about Rawls' Political Liberalism?" *Journal of Politics* 58 (1): 1-24.
- Alston, William P. (1991) *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press).
- Anscombe, G.E.M. (1957) *Intention* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press).
- _____. (1958) "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33: 1-19.
- _____. (1990) "On the Source of the Authority of the State" in *Authority* ed. Joseph Raz (Washington Square, NY, New York University Press), pp. 142-173.
- Anselm of Canterbury (1926) *Proslogium; Monologium; an Appendix in Behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo*, [internet] tr. Sidney Norton Deane (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company). Available from:
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic_works.toc.html>
[Accessed 2 June 2006]
- _____. (2000) "De Casu Diaboli" in *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, tr. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Minneapolis, Arthur J. Benning Press) [internet] Available at:
<<http://cla.umn.edu/sites/jhopkins/DeCasu.pdf>> [Accessed 3 June 2006]
- Appelbaum, Arthur Isak (1999) "Doctor, Schmoctor: Practice Positivism and Its Complications," in *The American Medical Ethics Revolution: How the AMA's Cod of Ethics Has Transformed Physicians' Relationships to Patients, Professionals, and Society* ed. Robert B. Baker, et al. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press), 144-157.
- Aquinas, Thomas (1947) *The Summa Theologica* (Benziger Bros. edition) [internet] Tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Available from:
<<http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/home.html>> [Accessed 2 June 2006]

- Arendt, Hannah (1965) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, Penguin Books).
- Aristotle (1941) *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited and with an introduction by Richard McKeon (New York, Random House).
- Arnhart, Larry (1998) *Darwinian Natural Right: The Biological Ethics of Human Nature* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press)
- _____. (2003) *Political Questions*, third edition, (Prospect Heights, Waveland).
- Audi, Robert and Nicholas Wolterstorff (1997) *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate* (New York: Rowman & Little Field Publishers, Inc.)
- Augustine, Saint (1961) *Confessions*. Translated with an Introduction by R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books).
- _____. (1984) *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, tr. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books).
- _____. (1996) *Teaching Christianity: De Doctrina Christiana* tr. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY, New City Press)
- Bacon, Francis (2004) *The Advancement of Learning* [internet] Available from: <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/adlr10.txt> [Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Bailey, F.G. (1991) *The Prevalence of Deceit* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- Baillie, John (1952) *Natural Science and the Spiritual Life* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons).
- Barth, Karl (1957) *Church Dogmatics, vol. 2, The Doctrine of God*, first and second half-volumes; eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance; trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, Harold Knight, J.L.M. Haire (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark).
- _____. (1961) *Church Dogmatics, III/4*, trans. A.T. Mackay et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 357-63 in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, eds. Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987)
- Beauchamp, Tom L. (1997) "Comparative Studies: Japan and America," in *Philosophy and Medicine* 54: 25-48.

- Berger, Peter L. (1970) *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York, Anchor).
- _____. (1973) *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York, Vintage).
- _____. (1990) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, Anchor).
- Bibb, Henry (1849) *Narrative of the Life and Adventure of Henry Bibb, An American Slave* (New York, 1849).
- Blassingame, John W., ed. (1977) *Slave Testimony* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University).
- Bleich, J. David (1979) "The Obligation to Heal in Judaic Tradition: A Comparative Analysis," in *Jewish Bioethics* eds. Fred Rosner and J. David Bleich (New York, Sanhedrin Press), 1-44.
- Bowman, James (2001) "From Heroes to Herostratus", An address to the Friends of *The New Criterion*, New York, April 18, 2001
- _____. (2002a) "Keen About Death": Reintroducing the Language of National Honor" in *Our Brave New World: Essays on the Impact of September 11*, edited by Wladyslaw Pleszczynski (Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press).
- _____. (2002b) "Whatever Happened to Honor?" The Bradley Lecture, American Enterprise Institute. June 10, 2002.
- Boyle, Robert *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature*, ed. Edward B. Davis and Michael Hunter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Branson, Roy (1973) "The Secularization of American Medicine" *Hastings Center Studies* 1 (2): 17-28 in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, eds. Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987)
- Budziszewski, J. (1992) *True Tolerance: Liberalism and the Necessity of Judgment* (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers).
- _____. (2002) "The Second Table Project" *First Things* 124: 23-31.
- _____. (2003) *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide* (Dallas, Spence).
- Calvin, John (1953) *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans).
- Calvin, John (1541) *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* [internet] Available from:

http://www.reformed.org/documents/calvin/geneva_catachism/geneva_catachism.html [Accessed 2 June 2006]

- Carré, Meyrick H. (1946) *Realists and Nominalists* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Casey, John (1990) *Pagan Virtue: An Essay in Ethics* (Oxford, Clarendon).
- Cassell, Eric (1994) "The Sanctity of Life Seduced: A Symposium on Medical Ethics" *First Things* 42: 13-27.
- Celano, Anthony (1987) "The Concept of Worldly Beatitude in the Writings of Thomas Aquinas," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25:215-226.
- Chen, Xunwu (1999) "A Confucian Reflection on Experimenting with Human Subjects" in *Confucian Bioethics* ed. Ruiping Fan (Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers).
- Cohen, S. Marc (2002) "The Four Causes" [internet] Available from: <http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/4causes.htm> [2 June 2006]
- D'Arcy, Eric (1974) "'Worthy of Worship': A Catholic Contribution," *Religion and Morality*, ed. G. Outka and J.P. Reeder, Jr. (Garden City, NY, Anchor), 173-203.
- Davis, Edward Bradford, Jr. (1984) "Creation, Contingency, and Early Modern Science: The Impact of Voluntaristic Theology on Seventeenth Century Natural Philosophy," (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Indiana University).
- Delbruck, Max (1976) "How Aristotle Discovered DNA" in *Physics and Our World: A Symposium in Honor of Victor F. Weisskopf* (American Institute of Physics, New York), 123-130.
- DeMarco, Donald (1996) *The Heart of Virtue: Lessons from Life and Literature Illustrating the Beauty and Value of Moral Character* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press).
- Dihle, Albrecht (1982) *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley, University of California Press).
- Donagan, Alan (1985) *Human Ends and Human Actions: An Exploration in St. Thomas's Treatment* (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press).
- Donnellan, Keith (1966) "Reference and Definite Descriptions" *Philosophical Review* 75: 281-304.

- _____. (1972) "Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions" in *The Semantics of Natural Languages*, ed. Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel), 356-379.
- Duncan, Steven D. (1995) *A Primer of Modern Virtue Ethics* (Lanham, University Press of America).
- Dunne, Joseph (2002) "Ethics Revised: Flourishing as Vulnerable and Dependent" [Critical Notice of Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*] *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 10 (3): 339-363.
- Duns Scotus, John (1975) *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*, tr. Felix Alluntis, O.F.M, and Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M. (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- _____. (1997) *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, tr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M. (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press).
- Eck, Marcel (1970) *Lies and Truth*, tr. Bernard Murchland (London, MacMillan Co.)
- Elgin, Catherine Z. (2001) "What's the Use?" *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture* 3(3): 9-25.
- Elliot, Carl (2000) "A New Way to Be Mad" *The Atlantic Monthly* 286 (6): 72-84.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke (1995) *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press).
- Fears, J. Rufus (2000) "Natural Law: The Legacy of Greece and Rome," in *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural Law*, ed. Edward B. McLean (Wilmington, DE, ISI Books), 19-56.
- Field, Gregory P. (2001) *Religious Therapeutics: Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda, and Tantra* (Albany, State University of New York Press).
- Foot, Philippa (1985) "Virtues and Vices" in *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life: Introductory Readings in Ethics*, eds. Christina Sommers and Fred Sommers (New York, Harcourt Brace College Publishers), 250-265.
- Foster, M.B. (1936a) "Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature" *Mind* 44: 439-466.
- _____. (1936b) "Christian Theology and Modern Science of Nature" *Mind* 45: 1-27.
- Gaita, Raimond (2000) *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice* (London: Routledge, 2000).

- Galston, William A. (1999) "Value Pluralism and Liberal Political Theory" *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 769-778.
- _____. (2002) *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Gauthier, David (1991) "Why Contractarianism" in *Contractarianism and Rational Choice: Essays on David Gauthier's Morals by Agreement*, ed. Peter Vallentyne (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 15-30.
- Gerson, Lloyd P. (2005) *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- Goldstick, Daniel (1974) "Monotheism's Euthyphro Problem" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 3: 585-9.
- Gilson, Etienne (1984) *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*, tr. John Lyon (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- Green, Ronald M. (1992) "Jewish ethics and beneficence," in *Beneficence and Health Care*, ed. Earl E. Shelp, [vol 11 of series: *Philosophy and Medicine*, eds. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. and Stuart F. Spicker] (Boston, D. Reidel Publishing Co.), 109-126.
- Greenberg, Kenneth S. (1985) *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press).
- _____. (1996) *Honor and Slavery: lies, duels, noses, masks, dressing as a woman, gifts, strangers, humanitarianism, death, slave rebellions, the proslavery argument, baseball, hunting, and gambling in the Old South* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press).
- Haldane, John (1994) "MacIntyre's Thomist Revival: What Next?" in John Horton and Susan Mendus, eds. *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Cambridge, Polity Press).
- Halyburton, Thomas (1798) *Natural Religion Insufficient, and Revealed Necessary, to Man's Happiness in his Present State, or, A Rational Inquiry into the Principles of the Modern Deists wherein is Largely Discovered their Utter Insufficiency to Answer the Great Ends of Religion, and the Weakness of their Pleadings for the Sufficiency of Nature's Light to Eternal Happiness: particularly the Writings of the Late Learned Lord Herbert, the Great Patron of Deism* (Philadelphia, Hogan & M'Elroy).

- Hare, John E. (1996) *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (New York, Oxford University Press).
- _____. (2000) "Scotus on Morality and Nature" *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9: 15-38.
- _____. (2001) *God's Call: Moral Realism, God's Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans).
- Hare, R.M. (1999) *Objective Prescriptions* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).
- Hathout, Hassan (1992) "Islamic Basis for Biomedical Ethics" in *Transcultural Dimensions in Medical Ethics*, eds. Edmund Pellegrino, Patricia Mazzarella, and Pietro Corsi (Frederick, MD, University Publishing Group), 57-72.
- Hauerwas, Stanley (1977) "Must a Patient Be a Person to Be a Patient? Or, My Uncle Charlie Is Not Much of a Person But He Is Still My Uncle Charlie" in *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations into Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, U. of Notre Dame Press) 127-131.
- Hauerwas, Stanley and Charles Pinches (1997) *Christians among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame).
- Helm, Paul (1981) "Introduction" in *Divine Commands and Morality* ed. Paul Helm (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Helm, Paul, ed. (1981) *Divine Commands and Morality* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Hittinger, Russell (1994) "Natural Law as 'Law'" *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 39: 1-32.
- _____. (2003) *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World* (Wilmington, Delaware, ISI Books).
- Hoekema, A. (1994) *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company).
- Idziak, Janine Marie (1979) *Divine Command Morality: Historical and Contemporary Readings* (New York, The Edwin Mellen Press).
- Ingham, Mary Elizabeth (1989) *Ethics and Freedom: An Historical-Critical Investigation of Scotist Ethical Thought* (Lanham, MD, University of America Press).
- _____. (1996) *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living According to John Duns Scotus* (Quincy, Ill., Franciscan Press).

- Islamic Code of Medical Ethics (2006) Available from:
<<http://www.islamset.com/ethics/code/society.html>>
[Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Jonsen, Albert R. (2000) *A Short History of Medical Ethics* (New York, Oxford University Press).
- Kallas, Endel (1982) "The Spirituality of Luther: A Reappraisal of His Contribution" *Spirituality Today* 34(4): 292-302.
- Katz, Joseph J. (2006) "Heavy Water" in *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology Online*
http://www.accessscience.com/Encyclopedia/3/31/Est_311450_frameset.html [Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Kavka, Gregory (1983) "The Toxin Puzzle" *Analysis* 43: 33-6.
- Kenny, Anthony (1998) "Aquinas on Aristotelian Happiness," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleanore Stump (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press).
- Khushf, George (1999) "Reflections on the Dignity of Guan Zhong: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Liberal Notions of Suicide" in *Confucian Bioethics* ed. Ruiping Fan (Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers), 103-126.
- Knight, Kelvin, ed. (1998) *The MacIntyre Reader* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- Kripke, Saul A. (1972) "Naming and Necessity" in *The Semantics of Natural Languages*, ed. Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel), pp. 253-355, 763-769.
- Kullmann, W. (1985) "Different Concepts of the Final Cause in Aristotle," in A. Gotthelf (ed.), *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things* (Pittsburgh 1985), pp. 170-175.
- Kuyper, Abraham (1932) *Calvinism: Being the Six "Stone" Lectures Given at Princeton Theological Seminary, U.S.A.* (London, Sovereign Grace Union).
- Lee, Patrick and Robert P. George (2005a) "Dualistic Delusions" *First Things* 150: 5-7.
- _____. (2005b) "Correspondence: Dual Over Dualism" *First Things* 153: 2ff.
- Levenson, Jon D. (1993) *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, Yale University Press).
- Linker, Damon (2002) "Nietzsche's Truth" *First Things* 125: 50-60.

- MacDonald, Scott (1990) "Egoistic Rationalism: Aquinas' Basis for Christian Morality" in Michael D. Beaty, ed. *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- _____. (1991) "Ultimate Ends in Practical Reasoning," *Philosophical Review* 100: 31-66.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair (1966) *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century* (New York, Collier Books/Macmillan Publishing Co).
- _____. (1975) "How virtues become vices: Values, medicine and social context," *Evaluation and Explanation in the Biomedical Sciences* (D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht-Holland), 97-111.
- _____. (1979) "Why is the Search for the Foundations of Ethics So Frustrating?" *Hastings Center Report* 9:16-22.
- _____. (1984) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, 2nd. Ed.* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- _____. (1986) "Which God ought we to obey and why?" *Faith and Philosophy* 3: 359-371.
- _____. (1988) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- _____. (1990) *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- _____. (1991) *How to Appear Virtuous Without Actually Being So* (Lancaster, Centre for the Study of Cultural Values).
- _____. (1994) "A Partial Response to My Critics" in John Horton and Susan Mendus, eds. *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Cambridge, Polity Press), 283-304.
- _____. (1998) "First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues" in Knight, Kelvin, ed. (1998) *The MacIntyre Reader* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press), 171-201; first published as the annual Aquinas Lecture, 1990, Marquette University Press.
- _____. (1999) *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago, Open Court).
- _____. (2000) "Theories of Natural Law in the Culture of Advanced Modernity" in *Common Truths: New Perspectives on Natural*

Law, ed. Edward B. McLean (Wilmington, DE, ISI Books), 91-115.

Maciocia, Giovanni (1989) *The Foundations Of Chinese Medicine: A Comprehensive Text For Acupuncturists And Herbalists* (New York, Churchill Livingstone).

Mason, Andrew (1994) "MacIntyre on Liberalism and its Critics: Tradition, Incommensurability and Disagreement" in John Horton and Susan Mendus, eds. *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Cambridge, Polity Press).

McCain, John (1999) *Faith Of My Fathers* with Mark Salter (New York, Random House).

McDowell, Josh and Don Stewart (1983) *Handbook of Today's Religions* (San Bernardino, Here's Life Publishers).

McGrath, Alister E. (2004) *The Science Of God: An Introduction To Scientific Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub.).

McKnight, Stephen A. (2006) *The Religious Foundations Of Francis Bacon's Thought* (Columbia, Mo., University of Missouri Press).

Mencius, (1997) *The Works of Mencius*, tr. James Legge. Available from: <http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius> [Accessed 2 June 2006]

Milbank, John (1990) *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge, Basil Blackwell).

Miller, David (1994) "Virtues, Practices, and Justice" in John Horton and Susan Mendus, eds. *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Cambridge, Polity Press).

Moonan, Lawrence (1994) *Divine Power: The Medieval power Distinction up to its Adoption by Albert, Bonaventure, and Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Mouw, Richard J. (1990) *The God Who Commands: A Study in Divine Command Ethics* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).

Murdoch, Iris (1970) *The Sovereignty of Good* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

Murphy, G. Ronald, S.J. (2001) *The Owl, the Raven, and the Dove: The Religious Meaning of the Grimms' Magic Fairy Tales* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

- Murphy, Mark C. (2001) "Natural Law, Consent, and Political Obligation" in *Natural Law and Modern Moral Philosophy*, ed. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.)
- _____. (2002a) *An Essay on Divine Authority* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- _____. (2002b) "Theological Voluntarism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2002 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2002/entries/voluntarism-theological/> >. [2 June 2006]
- _____. (2002c) "The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2002/entries/natural-law-ethics/> [Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Nash, Ronald H. (1983) *The Concept of God* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan).
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (c. 2001) "Reflections on Islam and Modern Life," *Al-Serat* 6 (1) <<http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/reflect-nasr.htm>> [Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Needham, Joseph (1962) *Science and Civilisation in China, vol 2: History of Scientific Thought* (London, Cambridge University Press).
- _____. (1970) *Clerks and Craftsmen in China and the West* (Cambridge, Cambridge).
- Neuhaus, Richard John (1997) "The Approaching Century of Religion" *First Things* 76 (October 1997): 75-93. Available from: <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9710/public.html> [Accessed 2 June 2006]
- Newbigin, Lesslie (1991) *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)
- _____. (1996) *Truth and Authority in Modernity* (Valley Forge, PA, Trinity Press International).
- Ni, Peimin (1999) "Confucian virtues and personal health" in *Confucian Bioethics* ed. Ruiping Fan (Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers).
- Niebuhr, Reinhold (1932) *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons).

- Nowell-Smith, Patrick (1967) "Religion and Morality," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York, Macmillan), pp. 150-58.
- Nozick, Robert (1974) *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York, Basic Books).
- O'Donovan, Oliver (1980) *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, Yale University Press).
- Osofsky, Gilbert, ed. (1969) *Puttin' On Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northup* (New York, Harper & Row).
- Pellegrino, Edmund D. and David C. Thomasma (1981) *A philosophical basis of medical practice: toward a philosophy and ethic of the healing professions* (New York, Oxford University Press).
- _____. (1988) *For the Patient's Good: the Restoration of Beneficence in Health Care* (New York,
- _____. (1993) *The Virtues in Medical Practice* (New York, Oxford University Press).
- Piper, John (2000) *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God*, revised (Sisters, Multnomah Publishers).
- Plato (1988) *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo* tr. Benjamin Jowett (Amherst, NY, Prometheus Books).
- Polanyi, Michael, and Harry Prosch (1975) *Meaning* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- Porter, Jean (2003) "Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre" in *Alasdair MacIntyre* ed. Mark C. Murphy (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 38-69
- Porter, Ray (1992) "The patient in England, c. 1660-c1800" in *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays* ed. Andrew Wear (New York, Cambridge University Press).
- Pritchard, James B., ed. (1958) *The Ancient Near East: A New Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, 2 vols. (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- Putnam, Hilary (1975a) *Mind, Language and Reality: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- _____. (1975b) "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" in *Language, Mind, and Knowledge: Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*,

vol. 7, ed. Keith Gunderson (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press), 131-193.

- Qiu, Ren-Zong (1992) "Medical Ethics and Chinese Culture" in *Transcultural Dimensions in Medical Ethics*, Pellegrino E. et al, eds, (Frederick, Maryland, University Publishing Group Inc.).
- Quinn, Philip (2000) "Divine Command Theory," in *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, ed. Hugh LaFollette (Cambridge, Blackwell), 53-73.
- Rachels, James (1971) "God and Human Attitudes" *Religious Studies* 7: 325-337.
- Rawls, John (1971) *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press).
- _____. (1987) "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus" in *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7: 1-25.
- _____. (1993) *Political Liberalism* (New York, Columbia University Press).
- Raz, Joseph (1986) *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford, Clarendon).
- Reppert, Victor (2003) *C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: A Philosophical Defense Of Lewis's Argument From Reason* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press).
- Rhonheimer, Martin (2000) *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist view of Moral Autonomy*, tr. Gerald Malsbary (New York, Fordham University Press).
- Rispler-Chaim, Vardit (1993) *Islamic Medical Ethics in the Twentieth Century* (New York, E.J. Brill).
- Ritschl, Dietrich (1976) "Some Comments on the Background and Influence of Augustine's *Lex Aeterna* Doctrine" in *Creation, Christ, And Culture : Studies in Honour of T. F. Torrance* ed. Richard W. A. McKinney (Edinburgh, Clark), 63-81.
- Rooney, Paul (1996a) "Divine Commands, Christian Platonism and God's Nature" *Heythrop Journal* 37 (2): 155-175.
- Rooney, Paul (1996b) *Divine Command Morality* (Aldershot, Avebury).
- Rosner, Fred (1995) *Medicine in the Bible and the Talmud: Selections from Classical Jewish Sources* (Hoboken, NJ, KTAV Publishing House).

- Sandel, Michael. J., ed. (1982) *Liberalism and Its Critics* (New York: New York University Press).
- Savage-Smith, Emilie (1997) "Europe and Islam," *Western Medicine: An Illustrated History* (New York, Oxford U Press) [Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford]
- Scheffler, Samuel (1983) "Review of *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* by Alasdair MacIntyre," *Philosophical Review* 92 (3): 443-447.
- Shatzmiller, Joseph (1994) *Jews, medicine, and medieval society* (Berkeley, University of California Press).
- Shiedermayer, David (1998) "Honor Thy Patient" in Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey, eds. *On Moral Medicine*, second edition. (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 771-777; previously published as David Shiedermayer (1994) *Putting the Soul Back in Medicine: Reflections on Compassion and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book), 36-49.
- Skillen, James W. (1991) "Progressive Calvinism: An Introduction to the Readings" in *Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society*, eds. James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy (Atlanta, Scholars Press).
- Spykman, Gordon J. (1992) *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans).
- Stout, Jeffrey (1988) *Ethics after Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Boston, Beacon Press).
- Taylor, Charles (1989) *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press).
- Taylor, Charles (1990) "Religion in a Free Society." In *Articles of Faith, Articles of Peace*. ed. James Davison Hunter and Os Guinness (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution), , 93-113.
- Taylor, Charles (1996) "Iris Murdoch and Moral Philosophy" in *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, eds. Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 3-28.
- Thomas, Aquinas, Saint, (1975) *Summa contra gentiles* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- Torrance, Thomas F. (1968) "The Ethical Implications of Anselm's *De Veritate*" *Theologische Zeitschrift* 24: 309-319.

- _____. (1969) *Theological Science* (London, Oxford University Press).
- _____. (1982/1999) *Reality and Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity Press).
- Tournier, Paul (1954) *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible*, trans. Edwin Hudson (London, SCM Press; New York, Harper & Row, 1960) "The Meaning of Medicine" in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, eds. Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987)
- Unschuld, Paul U. (1979) *Medical Ethics in Imperial China: A Study of Historical Anthropology* (Berkeley, University of California Press).
- Walzer, Michael (1994) *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press).
- Wells, David F. (1993) *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company).
- Wierenga, Edward R. (1989) *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- Williams, Thomas (1995) "How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69: 425-445. Available from: <http://www.nd.edu/~wwillia5/acpq.htm> [2 June 2006]
- _____. (1997) "Reason, Morality, and Voluntarism in Duns Scotus: A Pseudo-Problem Dissolved" *The Modern Schoolman* 74: 73-94.
- _____. (1998) "The Unmitigated Scotus" *Archiv fur Geschichte de Philosophie* 80: 162-181.
- _____. (2000a) "Lying, Deception, and the Virtue of Truthfulness: A Reply to Garcia," *Faith and Philosophy* 17: 242-248
- _____. (2000b) "A Most Methodical Lover? On Scotus's Arbitrary Creator." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38: 169-202.
- _____. (2004) "John Duns Scotus", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2004 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [internet] Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2004/entries/duns-scotus/> [Accessed 2 June 2006]

_____. (2005) "The Divine Nature and Scotus's Libertarianism: A Reply to Mary Beth Ingham" (under submission)

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram (1982) *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

Yearley, Lee H. (1990) *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany, State University of New York Press).

INDEX

- Abraham, 167, 168, 179, 205, 211, 227, 272, 304
- Adams, Robert Merrihew, 207, 215, 284, 286, 287, 288, 293, 297
- affectio commodi*, 249, 250, 251, 252, 269, 270
- affectio iustitiae*, 249, 250, 252, 254, 266, 267, 268, 269, 277
- Anscombe, G.E.M., 18, 67, 97, 203, 215, 221, 222, 231, 293, 297
- Anselm of Canterbury, 297
- Applbaum, Arthur Isak, 90, 91, 297
- Aquinas, Thomas, 5, 11, 12, 16, 18, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 36, 55, 67, 68, 69, 75, 101, 102, 104, 110, 134, 160, 167, 174, 180, 181, 190, 198, 202, 208, 214, 232, 235, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 249, 251, 252, 257, 262, 264, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273, 283, 297, 300, 304, 305, 306, 310, 312
- Arendt, Hannah, 273, 298
- Aristotle, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 38, 46, 55, 58, 67, 68, 74, 75, 101, 102, 109, 134, 147, 149, 154, 164, 178, 180, 181, 182, 198, 202, 208, 214, 221, 232, 238, 242, 244, 246, 252, 260, 262, 263, 264, 266, 280, 298, 300, 302, 304
- Arnhart, Larry, 34, 298
- authority, 18, 22, 24, 43, 126, 149, 154, 161, 165, 179, 185, 193, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 256, 267, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 295, 296
- Bacon, Francis, 176, 177, 180, 298, 306
- Baillie, John, 180, 298
- Barth, Karl, 207, 209, 298
- Berger, Peter L., 149, 296, 299
- Bibb, Henry, 119, 299, 308
- Blassingame, John W., 120, 121, 123, 299
- Bleich, J. David, 88, 299
- Bowman, James, 299
- Boyle, Robert, 181, 299
- Branson, Roy, 94, 299
- Budziszewski, J., 115, 299
- Calvin, John, 11, 36, 142, 299
- Casey, John, 102, 260, 300
- Cassell, Eric, 94, 300
- Chen, Xunwu, 107, 300
- Cohen, S. Marc, 26, 27, 300
- courage, 9, 14, 25, 44, 45, 46, 48, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 74, 100, 102, 103, 104, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 128, 130, 137, 144, 146, 147, 158, 163, 210, 254, 263, 274
- Davis, Edward Bradford, Jr., 181, 299, 300
- Delbruck, Max, 300
- Descartes, 174, 176, 180, 181
- Dihle, Albrecht, 178, 179, 300
- Donagan, Alan, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 300
- Donnellan, Keith, 288, 300
- Dunne, Joseph, 35, 301
- Duns Scotus, John, 6, 11, 17, 18, 87, 125, 166, 176, 177, 181, 183, 184, 186, 188, 190, 191, 192, 195, 197, 199, 202, 225, 232, 235, 238, 241, 242, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 254, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 272, 276, 288, 301, 303, 311, 312
- Elliot, Carl, 93, 301
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke, 273, 301
- Enlightenment project, 8, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 30, 49, 132, 139
- eudaimonia*, 67, 68, 69, 149, 239, 242, 243, 244, 245, 247, 248, 253, 257, 260, 262, 264, 271, 274
- eudaimonism, 11, 19, 39, 125, 148, 149, 164, 170, 190, 201, 215, 224, 235, 244, 252, 254, 255, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 265, 272, 274, 293
- Field, Gregory P., 78, 80, 298, 301
- flourishing, 1, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 25, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 52, 70, 74, 79, 90, 94, 95, 101, 103, 106, 109, 125, 133, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 182, 183, 187, 189, 191, 194, 195, 199, 200, 201, 203, 222, 224, 225, 226,

- 227, 230, 231, 232, 234,
235, 237, 239, 242, 243,
246, 247, 251, 252, 253,
254, 255, 256, 257, 259,
260, 261, 262, 264, 265,
269, 270, 271, 272, 273,
274, 275, 276, 294
- Foot, Philippa, 301
Foster, M.B., 181, 182, 301
Gaita, Raimond, 35, 301
Galileo, 176, 181
Galston, William A., 65, 302
Gauthier, David, 152, 169, 302
George, Robert P., 36, 254, 304
Gerson, Lloyd P., 28, 29, 30, 302
Gilson, Etienne, 302
Goldstick, Daniel, 193, 302
Green, Ronald M., 89, 302
Greenberg, Kenneth S., 120, 302
guinea worm, 151
Halyburton, Thomas, 296, 302
Hare, John, 6, 190, 223, 241, 257,
288
Hathout, Hassan, 84, 85, 303
Hoekema, A., 36, 303
honesty, 9, 25, 45, 46, 48, 53, 54, 59,
109, 112, 113, 114, 118,
130, 137, 141, 163, 210
Idziak, Janine Marie, 303
Ingham, Mary Elizabeth, 242, 249,
303, 312
Islamic Code of Medical Ethics, 85,
86, 304
Jonsen, Albert R., 79, 83, 304
Kallas, Endel, 144, 304
Katz, Joseph J., 201, 289, 304
Kavka, Gregory, 168, 304
Kenny, Anthony, 304
Khushf, George, 107, 304
Kripke, Saul A., 288, 289, 304
Kullmann, W., 304
Kuyper, Abraham, 134, 304
Lee, Patrick, 36, 104, 304, 312
life-of-a-practitioner, 42, 60, 71, 72,
81, 83, 112, 114, 129, 133
Linker, Damon, 154, 155, 156, 157,
304
Luther, Martin, 11, 142, 304
MacDonald, Scott, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73,
248, 304, 305
MacIntyre, Alasdair, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10,
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,
18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,
25, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34,
35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42,
43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50,
51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58,
59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 66, 67,
70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 87, 97,
98, 101, 105, 109, 110, 111,
113, 114, 124, 129, 130,
131, 132, 133, 134, 135,
136, 137, 138, 139, 140,
141, 142, 143, 145, 146,
147, 148, 149, 150, 151,
152, 153, 154, 157, 158,
159, 160, 161, 163, 164,
166, 170, 173, 177, 186,
188, 189, 192, 193, 197,
198, 202, 203, 204, 205,
206, 207, 208, 209, 210,
211, 213, 214, 234, 236,
238, 244, 246, 247, 252,
253, 258, 260, 264, 267,
273, 275, 294, 296, 301,
302, 304, 305, 306, 308, 310
Maciocia, Giovanni, 306
McGrath, Alister E., 306
McKnight, Stephen A., 306
Mencius, 103, 104, 306, 312
Milbank, John, 149, 185, 306
Mouw, Richard J., 215, 306
Murphy, Mark C., 104, 169, 215,
218, 222, 223, 227, 229,
230, 231, 282, 283, 285,
286, 287, 288, 290, 291,
292, 293, 306, 307, 308
narrative unity of a life, 9, 12, 15, 24,
49, 54, 61, 129, 132, 133,
135, 136, 141
Nash, Ronald H., 175, 307
Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, 86, 307
natural law, 8, 17, 18, 19, 31, 32, 35,
150, 163, 165, 167, 169,
171, 172, 176, 177, 179,
183, 188, 190, 192, 197,
198, 202, 211, 213, 231,
241, 266, 267, 268, 269,
270, 278, 282, 283, 294
Needham, Joseph, 77, 78, 79, 307
Neuhaus, Richard John, 307
Newton, Isaac, 176, 181
Ni, Peimin, 76, 106, 107, 307
Niebuhr, Reinhold, 236, 237, 307
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 9, 16, 81, 109,
133, 148, 153, 154, 155,
156, 157, 158, 159, 160,
164, 304
Nowell-Smith, Patrick, 200, 308
Nozick, Robert, 90, 91, 308
obligation, 8, 19, 81, 86, 88, 89, 91,
99, 127, 128, 165, 169, 173,
185, 186, 187, 188, 201,
202, 203, 206, 215, 217,
218, 220, 240, 263, 277,
278, 279, 280, 281, 282,
284, 285, 286, 287, 288,
290, 291, 292, 293, 294
Osofsky, Gilbert, 119, 308
Pascal, Blaise, 11, 23
Pellegrino, Edmund D., 94, 97, 98,
99, 100, 303, 308, 309

- Piper, John, 185, 308
 Plato, 29, 179, 238, 308
practices, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 38,
 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45,
 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53,
 54, 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 64,
 65, 66, 67, 70, 71, 73, 74,
 75, 77, 79, 81, 87, 89, 90,
 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98,
 101, 105, 108, 109, 112,
 113, 129, 130, 131, 132,
 133, 135, 136, 137, 141,
 142, 145, 149, 163, 166,
 236, 254, 259, 294
 Pritchard, James B., 291, 308
 Putnam, Hilary, 288, 291, 292, 308
 Qiu, Ren-Zong, 309
 Rawls, John, 297, 309
 Raz, Joseph, 218, 297, 309
 Rhonheimer, Martin, 198, 309
 Rispler-Chaim, Vardit, 309
 Ritschl, Dietrich, 309
 Rooney, Paul, 193, 194, 195, 196,
 197, 213, 309
schmoctering, 90
simulacra, 12, 13, 50, 55, 56, 58, 60,
 61, 62, 96, 104, 112, 130,
 163, 183, 235, 261
 Skillen, James W., 134, 310
slavery, 112, 116, 117, 120, 121, 123,
 128
 Stout, Jeffrey., 278, 310
 Taylor, Charles, 35, 74, 310
theological voluntarism, 1, 12, 17,
 18, 161, 162, 163, 164, 167,
 169, 175, 177, 181, 184,
 188, 189, 191, 192, 193,
 198, 199, 201, 203, 204,
 205, 206, 207, 209, 210,
 213, 215, 222, 226, 234,
 278, 282, 283, 307
 Thomaśma, David C., 92, 93, 94, 97,
 98, 99, 100, 308
Thomism, 6, 13, 20, 35, 192, 197,
 199, 235, 249, 267, 273,
 284, 302, 309
 Torrance, T.F., 124, 125, 126, 127,
 174, 180, 298, 309, 310
truthfulness, 15, 25, 44, 45, 46, 53,
 112, 113, 114, 118, 119,
 123, 129, 158
 Unschuld, Paul U., 77, 82, 311
virtues, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 24,
 25, 27, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40,
 44, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53,
 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60,
 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 70,
 75, 83, 87, 95, 96, 97, 98,
 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105,
 106, 107, 108, 109, 110,
 111, 112, 113, 124, 125,
 129, 130, 132, 133, 134,
 135, 136, 137, 138, 139,
 141, 145, 146, 147, 148,
 154, 159, 163, 170, 173,
 183, 198, 199, 208, 210,
 220, 234, 235, 236, 238,
 252, 256, 260, 261, 262,
 263, 265, 272, 274, 305, 307
 Walzer, Michael, 311
 Wells, David F., 296, 308, 311
 Wierenga, Edward R., 311
 Williams, Thomas, 11, 175, 176, 186,
 187, 190, 191, 242, 250,
 251, 265, 266, 267, 269, 311
 Wyatt-Brown, Bertram, 120, 312
 Yearley, Lee H., 104, 312