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ALASDAIR MACINTYRE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARISTOTELIANISM: POLITICS OF EMANCIPATION, COMMUNITY AND THE GOOD

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INTRODUCTION

Research problem and its relevance

Over the last four decades, Alasdair MacIntyre has developed a distinctive neo-Aristotelian philosophy. It received its first formulation in *After Virtue* (published in 1981) and was further expanded and advanced through *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988)*, Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (1990), *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), and in multiple papers until its most recent restatement in *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (2016). MacIntyre's works have made a positive contribution to various areas of theoretical enquiry, including moral philosophy, political theory, social science, theology, and phenomenology, among others.

MacIntyre's Aristotelian works, although mostly presented as writing on moral philosophy, are also highly significant from the perspective of political theory. MacIntyre's interest in politics has never been merely theoretical: he himself had been a prominent contributor to Marxist politics as a philosopher and as a member of various political organisations before he gradually distanced himself from Marxism and eventually embraced what he presented as the neo-Aristotelian approach. Political dimension is clearly present in many of MacIntyre's post-*After Virtue* works. This allows us to talk about a specifically neo-Aristotelian political theory.

Neo-Aristotelianism has undoubtedly established itself as a distinct approach to politics. It is thus necessary to analyse its most important contributions to contemporary political theory as well as to trace the internal development of the neo-Aristotelian theory. As any other theoretical enterprise, it has also undergone important corrections and redefinitions. We therefore need to put these developments into perspective as compared to the current positions of neo-Aristotelianism and to ask questions about possible trajectories for further development. The political aspects of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian works have received growing attention from scholars. As the overview of literature on the topic, presented below, shows, various readings of neo-Aristotelian theory provide contradictory and often mutually exclusive interpretations. MacIntyre himself continuously engages in debates with his commentators and critics, which is why it is increasingly important to evaluate neo-Aristotelian political theory in light of these continuous debates. This dissertation provides a comprehensive reconstruction and interpretation of neo-Aristotelian political theory as developed by MacIntyre after his break with Marxism.

There is also practical relevance to research into the neo-Aristotelian political thought. Contemporary societies experience escalating political conflicts and crises. There is therefore growing urgency to ask questions like: What is the best approach to understanding current conflicts and the nature of political institutions? What normative grounds should underpin our political institutions? What form should progressive politics take? As any other political theory, neo-Aristotelianism proposes its own answers to these and similar questions.

Briefly put, what is specific about MacIntyre's arguments is that he draws a close connection between moral and political enquiries and (re)introduces the notion of the good into political theory. John Rawls has characterised a strand of contemporary liberalism with the formula that the right has priority over the good. MacIntyre's answer is a political theory that is, on the contrary, grounded in the notion of the good. Neo-Aristotelian political theory is distinct not only from liberalism, but also from other contemporary approaches, be they communitarian, Marxist, neo-Nietzschean or conservative. While accepting a Nietzschean dictum that modern moral discourse is an ideological mask worn by the will-to-power, MacIntyre maintains that meaningful ethical discourse is still possible. He takes issue with liberals by arguing for the political significance of the good while at the same time siding with them against conservatives on that the modern state is not, and should never become, a guardian of some substantive vision of the human good. In polemics with Marxism, MacIntyre insists that the classical Marxist project is no longer viable and that it is necessary to learn from the failures of Marxism. MacIntyre rejects politics of the state and turns toward politics of locality, i.e. of local communities, yet he eschews communitarian labels and warns against the cult of the local.

The turn towards local, small-scale politics is not something unique for neo-Aristotelianism. Recent critics of this turn have argued that such local grass-roots political practices that reject traditional party and state politics have already become a new common sense not only in left-wing circles but also in some right-wing movements (Srnicek and Williams 2015). But this only strengthens the actuality of researching the role small-scale politics plays in neo-Aristotelian theory and how it is conceptualised in the MacIntyrean ethico-political vocabulary. It remains important to develop a comprehensive account of the neo-Aristotelian political theory.

I will argue that MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism is informed by radical democratic aspirations and should be classed as an emancipatory political theory. The link between the moral question of the human good (or the good life) and radical democratic ideals is the central characteristic of neo-Aristotelian political theory. Such a position may seem highly paradoxical. Can the notion of the good life as conceived by MacIntyre have an emancipatory function? Does not democratic politics rest on moral pluralism? Should democratic politics dismiss any notion

of the human good as inherently authoritarian? Moral philosophy and political critique are closely connected. As an emancipatory theory, neo-Aristotelianism asks what social setting would best enable a collective enquiry into the nature of human well-being and action towards achieving it.

This dissertation looks comprehensively at the political dimensions of MacIntyre's work. It provides a reading of neo-Aristotelianism as a form of emancipatory politics. It also argues for the political significance of MacIntyre's work by focusing on the notions of the politics of local community and the good.

Object of the dissertation

MacIntyre's Aristotelian political theory is the object of this dissertation. The term that will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to MacIntyre's political thought is "Revolutionary Aristotelianism". The term was coined by Kelvin Knight in his influential essay by the same name (first published in 1994) with the intention to discard conservative interpretations of MacIntyre's philosophy. MacIntyre has himself acknowledged Knight's exposition of his views as "accurate and perceptive" (MacIntyre 1998a: 235). Many Marxist readers of MacIntyre (Burns 2011; Davidson 2011; Callinicos 2011; among others) have found the term "Revolutionary Aristotelianism" problematic, wondering how much of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism could be appropriated for emancipatory politics. I will be analysing MacIntyre's arguments in the perspective of emancipatory politics, thus the term "Revolutionary Aristotelianism" appropriately pinpoints the issue regarding the political aspects of MacIntyre's work. Another concern about the appropriateness of the designation points to the second element of the phrase. How much of MacIntyre's philosophy is truly Aristotelian? Knight, for example, points out that MacIntyre's central distinction between practice and institution is not Aristotelian (Knight 2007: 145-146). It is true that MacIntyre combines insights from many more sources than Aristotle. Still, MacIntyre himself refers to his position in *After Virtue* as Aristotelian, and to his arguments in later works as Thomistic Aristotelian, not to mention his most recent *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* where he identifies his stance as neo-Aristotelian. I have no reason not to accept his own self-labelling. I will keep the term Revolutionary Aristotelianism to name MacIntyrean political theory, while fully acknowledging the ambivalence and difficulties it implies.

Survey of principal literature and previous research

MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian political theory as developed from *After Virtue* onwards, together with the continuously growing corpus of scholarship on MacIntyre, will constitute the main sources for my research of Revolutionary Aristotelianism.

My reading of Revolutionary Aristotelianism must be situated in the context of existing interpretations of MacIntyre's ideas. The reception of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism went through several stages. First, MacIntyre was labelled a communitarian and his ideas were appropriated for the liberal-communitarian debate (Mullhall & Swift 1992). Pyter McMylor's study of MacIntyre's critique of bureaucratic rationality (McMylor 1994) also takes the political aspects of MacIntyre's work in dialogue with communitarianism. MacIntyre has repeatedly rejected any association with the communitarian label. He sees the issue of liberalism vs. communitarianism as an internal debate within liberalism (MacIntyre 1998b). In his survey of contemporary strands in political theory, Andrew Vincent (Vincent 2007) clearly defines neo-Aristotelianism as an approach distinct from communitarianism and argues that the term "community" as used in neo-Aristotelian political thought is very generic and does not imply any idealisation of communal relations that he attributes to communitarians. Unfortunately, Vincent's account remains rather limited because in his discussion he refers almost exclusively to *After Virtue*.

Jürgen Habermas has argued (without directly referencing MacIntyre) that neo-Aristotelianism is a form of "old conservatism" (Habermas 1997: 53). In a similar vein, Martha Nussbaum interprets MacIntyre's mature Aristotelianism as anti-rationalist philosophy that substitutes reason with political or ecclesiastic authority (Nussbaum 2001: xxvi). Richard Stout interprets MacIntyre's political philosophy as implying a "discursive closure" and therefore inherently authoritarian (quoted in D'Andrea 2006: 414).

Knight argues that MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism is not conservative, but revolutionary. He stresses the radical aspect of MacIntyre's work by arguing that MacIntyre is both a "radically political" and a "politically radical" thinker (Knight 2011: 34). Knight's study of Aristotelian ethics and politics (Knight 2007) remains an essential contribution to the debate on the political aspects of MacIntyre's work and is one of the strongest influences on my own interpretation of MacIntyre. However, Knight's account must be updated and expanded in light of new works by MacIntyre and his critics.

The publication of the collection of MacIntyre's Marxist essays (many of which had been unavailable for a long time) in *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement With Marxism: Selected Writings 1953-1974* (Blackledge & Davidson (eds.) 2008) has rekindled interest in MacIntyre's

early Marxism. Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson re-examine his early texts and point out how some of the current positions of the radical Left are similar to the themes found in early MacIntyre (for example, in their introduction Blackledge and Davidson comment on how the themes of desire and history are again re-opened by Toni Negri and Michael Hardt in their *Empire*). This renewed focus on early MacIntyre has allowed for a much more comprehensive understanding of the trajectory of his thought and has updated significantly the existing body of research that focused mostly on post-*After Virtue* writing.

The founding of *International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry* (ISME) in 2006 has created an institutional platform to debate various aspects of MacIntyre's philosophy. Annual ISME conferences have produced a multitude of papers, many of them published in critical collections: *Revolutionary Aristotelianism: Ethics, Resistance and Utopia* (Knight, Blackledge (eds.) 2008), *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, (Blackledge, Knight (eds.) 2011), *Virtue and Economy: Essays on Morality and Markets* (Bielskis and Knight (eds.) 2015). MacIntyre himself continuously engages in dialogue with various critics and commentators of his work. These debates are very important for my research as they highlight the problems and limitations of some of MacIntyre's positions and point to possible directions for further developing Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory. Some theses of this dissertation have also been presented at two ISME conferences to date: in 2014 (Athens) and 2016 (Wroclaw).

An important part of research on MacIntyre has focused on his conception of tradition. From the perspective of Revolutionary Aristotelianism, this focus on tradition seems to significantly downplay the political aspects of MacIntyre's works. Some accounts, like Chistopher Lutz's (Lutz 2004), analyse the notion of tradition from a religious Thomistic perspective. Such a reading is perfectly valid, as MacIntyre has developed the notion of tradition upon his conversion to Catholicism and his turn towards Thomas Aquinas. Unfortunately, some accounts tend to start with MacIntyre's Marxism and finish with the question of religion. Thus Émille Perreau-Sausinne (2005) argues that MacIntyre's Aristotle is devoid of political dimension and ends his reading of MacIntyre's work with a chapter on tradition and theology. In his introduction to Perrau-Saussinne's book, Pierre Manent suggests that MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is politically defeatist: his turn to the politics of locality equals an escape from actual political combat ("c'est fuir le combat prétandant batailler toujours", Perreau-Sausinne 2005: 5). From the perspective of *After Virtue,* such comments do contain a grain of truth, but they do not do justice to MacIntyre's work as a whole and are clearly wrong in light of MacIntyre's latest interventions into political theory.

My concern about this focus on tradition in MacIntyre's scholarship is reinforced by a recent political reading of the notion of tradition. Jeffery L. Nicholas (in Nicholas 2012) seeks to appropriate MacIntyre's notion of tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive reason in order to develop an emancipatory critique of society. Nicholas offers a valuable contribution to MacIntyre's scholarship by interpreting MacIntyre's work as overcoming the limitations of the Frankfurt School and Habermas' theory of communicative rationality. But Nicholas' overall argument, I would suggest, is problematic because he prioritises the concept of tradition at the expense of MacIntyre's political theory. Nicholas starts from the notion of tradition and argues that traditions provide a vision of the human good. Tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive rationality has critical emancipatory potential because it is guided by this notion of the good. MacIntyre's use of the term "tradition" refers to traditions of enquiry, while Nicholas extends the notion to embrace "concrete, cultural traditions" (Nicholas 2012: 13). One could argue that Nicholas' interpretation of MacIntyre's notion of tradition makes it hard to distinguish this very specific philosophical concept from the everyday conservative usage of the term. Secondly, it is difficult to sustain a claim that the rationality guided by the good of concrete cultural tradition is emancipatory. What makes the vision of the good in some particular tradition emancipatory rather than oppressive? A neo-Aristotelian answer to this question requires situating the concept of the good within the context of political struggles. It is therefore necessary to start from MacIntyre's notion of practices, goods and local politics, and not, as Nicholas does, by linking reason, tradition and the good without going into political critique. Nicholas' account is very important because it attempts to interpret MacIntyre's work from the perspective of emancipatory critique and I will also argue that Revolutionary Aristotelianism should be read from this perspective. However, rather than focusing on the notion of tradition, it is necessary to reconstruct the political theory that underlies MacIntyre's philosophy.

My reading of Revolutionary Aristotelianism will largely ignore MacIntyre's account of tradition. I will comment on it briefly, but there already exist extensive critical literature on the notion of tradition in MacIntyre's thought. As a political theory, Revolutionary Aristotelianism culminates in the account of emancipatory political struggles and local politics. It is also important that the notion of tradition is absent from MacIntyre's latest *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (2016). As to the problem of religion, MacIntyre's current philosophical position taken as a whole, of course, includes theistic claims. Nevertheless, MacIntyre's social and political theory is articulated without theistic presuppositions. Revolutionary Aristotelianism, as a political theory, is grounded in secular philosophical arguments.

Originality of the research

A survey of key scholarship on MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism reveals an absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date account of the Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory that would incorporate findings of the most recent research and debates on MacIntyre's work. My research will contribute to filling this gap.

I will approach Revolutionary Aristotelianism by way of emancipatory politics, reading it as one of the currents of post-Marxism. By this I mean that MacIntyre's previous critical engagement with Marxism is an important source for understanding political implications of his later Aristotelian writing; it also shares essential emancipatory (radical democratic) elements that characterised Marxism. Therefore I will examine in great detail the relationship between Marx and MacIntyre and the reasons for his ultimate rejection of the Marxist political and theoretical tradition. To treat MacIntyre's early Marxism as only a transitory phase which could be, as it were, discarded after his turn to Aristotle, is a misconception. Marx's role in MacIntyre's scholarship is essential, not least because MacIntyre returns to the question of the validity of Marxism in his latest works. This lends further support to my approach to Revolutionary Aristotelianism as an emancipatory political theory.

My enquiry into Revolutionary Aristotelianism is informed by vast existing literature, but my aim is to advance our understanding of Revolutionary Aristotelianism even further by analysing the form of politics defended by MacIntyre: local participatory politics aimed at individual and common goods and localised struggles against the power of state and capital. I will argue that the notion of the good that Revolutionary Aristotelianism brings into political theory has an emancipator potential if situated in the context of these political struggles.

MacIntyre published his *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (MacIntyre 2016) when the main body of my analysis had already been completed. MacIntyre's latest book argues for the necessity to integrate Thomistic Aristotelianism with Marx's critique of capitalism, thus reaffirming the line of interpretation of Revolutionary Aristotelianism I advance in my thesis. I have included the arguments of MacIntyre's latest work into my discussion to make sure that my reading of Revolutionary Aristotelianism is up-to-date and takes into account the most recent contributions by MacIntyre himself and the critical debates on his work.

Aims and objectives of the dissertation

The aim of my research is to provide a reading of Revolutionary Aristotelianism as an emancipatory political theory. I accomplish this via the following tasks or objectives:

To analyse MacIntyre's account of moral agency and its relation to social and political structures;

To analyse MacIntyre's reading of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Marx as political theorists and the significance of their insights for Revolutionary Aristotelianism;

To analyse MacIntyre's early endorsement of Marxist politics and the reasons for his gradual disengagement from the Marxist project;

To establish the conceptual continuity between MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism and the key readings of (ethical) Marxism;

To analyse MacIntyre's key political categories: community, the good, and politics as practice;

To analyse the form of political struggles envisaged in the Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory;

To analyse various existing interpretations of Revolutionary Aristotelianism.

Methods of research

This dissertation is a work in political theory. It aims to construct and reflect theoretically on a political theory advanced in the works of Alasdair MacIntyre. I use close textual analysis to identify key concepts in the Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory, trace their development and expose critical controversies surrounding them. The reading of political theory advanced in this thesis is also informed by awareness of the historical circumstances surrounding different texts and how they may influence the particular political viewpoints discerned in these texts.

My analysis of Revolutionary Aristotelianism will not proceed by discussing key texts in the chronological order. Such presentation allows for too much repetition and, moreover, there already exist general commentaries on MacIntyre's work that proceed chronologically (for example, D'Andrea 2006). Instead, I will structure my analysis around key issues addressed and concepts developed in the Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory. This allows me to recognise the evolution and changes of particular concepts and problems in MacIntyre's work and also to bring into the discussion MacIntyre's commentators and critics. This way, I will be able to posit and develop my own reading of Revolutionary Aristotelianism continuously alongside the contributions of other readers and critics of MacIntyre's work.

Another important methodological aspect has to do with the demarcation lines between different spheres of enquiry (e.g., political, ethical, or sociological). MacIntyre himself is highly critical of the contemporary compartmentalisation of disciplines and his work integrates insights

from various areas: sociology, history, analytical philosophy, literary criticism and others. Because of this feature of MacIntyre's approach, my own analysis will have to treat the boundaries of the discipline of political theory as flexible and not rigidly defined. For example, it is not possible to understand MacIntyre's critique of the state and state politics or his notion of the common good without analysing in greater detail the neo-Aristotelian conception of practical reasoning, thus stepping into the field of practical philosophy and ethics.

Main theses

Revolutionary Aristotelianism is a form of post-Marxism. It aims to delineate possibilities for continuing the emancipatory project after the defeats and failures of the politics of classical Marxism.

MacIntyre's account of the flourishing political community joins a modernised version of Aristotelian ethics of virtues with the radical democratic aspirations of Marxism.

The notion of the good, as developed by Revolutionary Aristotelianism, is emancipatory. It is a political notion that is articulated through the practice of politics as shared deliberation in an open democratic community. The notion of the good provides necessary moral resources to resist the destructive forces of the state and capital and to imagine alternative forms of social and political organisation.

In its initial formulation, the Revolutionary Aristotelian political trajectory amounted to defensive politics of local communities against the destructive powers of capitalism and the state. MacIntyre's latest interventions into political theory point towards a much more active politics of social transformation. This allows an understanding of local neo-Aristotelian politics in the context of broader struggles for social transformation.

Revolutionary Aristotelianism conceptualises an anti-elitist, democratic form of politics grounded in local participatory structures. Political deliberation is conceived of as part of the practical rationality of ordinary people. Revolutionary Aristotelianism observes Marx's claim that emancipation is always self-emancipation.

Structure of the dissertation

My analysis of the Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory will proceed through five chapters. The first chapter sets the general line of reading MacIntyre's work by analysing his account of practical agency under modernity. I discuss MacIntyre's sociology of practices, individual and collective narratives, and tradition by asking how the problem of political subjectivity is conceived of through these categories. MacIntyre reveals an important relation between practical agency and social structures that either impede or allow individuals to be independent rational practical agents. The chapter points to the conclusion that the notion of community is central to MacIntyre's ethico-political project.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on how MacIntyre develops his theory by integrating insights from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Karl Marx. I start with Aristotle's notions of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*), virtue/excellence (*aretē*), practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), and the *polis* and then focus on MacIntyre's interpretations of Aristotle's ethico-political project. Next, I analyse the political aspects of MacIntyre's embrace of Thomas Aquinas and the theory of natural law as a way to transcend the limitations of Aristotle's philosophy. Marxism was and remains an important source of inspiration for MacIntyre's thought. In Chapter 3, I turn to a discussion on MacIntyre's appropriation of Marx's critique of capitalism. I also enquire more deeply into the relation between Marxism and Revolutionary Aristotelianism. I focus on Marx's notions of species-being and alienation and draw on a number of contemporary Marxist scholars who interpret the ethical foundation of Marx's thought as Aristotelian and who have appropriated MacIntyrean notions of practices and virtues. I conclude that Marxism and Revolutionary Aristotelianism share the similar ethico-political ideals but disagree on the issue of political practice.

MacIntyre's turn from the Marxist revolutionary project to the politics of local resistances is addressed in Chapter 4. In his early Marxist works, MacIntyre connected the themes of desire, history and the question of the human good with the revolutionary Marxist politics. Using Lucien Goldmann's terminology, MacIntyre put a wager on the potential of the working classes to realise a more just society. I argue that his eventual rejection of the Marxist framework did not mean a rejection of emancipatory ideals. In this chapter, I trace MacIntyre's turn to a more pessimistic take on the possibility of emancipation. In MacIntyre's recent works, the ideals of the good life are no longer projected onto the working class revolution, but could still be realised in the politics of local participatory community.

In the last chapter, I analyse various aspects of MacIntyre's conception of local politics. I start with a detailed account of the notion of politics as practice and its function within the

community. I conclude that MacIntyre's ideal community is, first of all, a radically democratic community that seeks to realise the good life as defined in Aristotelian and Marxist terms. To spell out the radical democratic content of Revolutionary Aristotelianism, I discuss the relation between the state and community and then between community and capital. In the final section, I offer some comments about the utopian side of the notion of the good as developed in the Revolutionary Aristotelian theory. This chapter also looks at some significant changes in MacIntyre's political thought that point towards a much more active political struggle for broader social transformation.

1. ALASDAIR MACINTYRE'S SOCIAL TELEOLOGY

1.1. Moral agency and modernity

One of the main problems raised in the works of Alasdair MacIntyre is the state of practical agency in contemporary societies. This is a fundamentally political problem: practical agency, as it will be argued throughout this chapter, includes the ability to enquire into the nature of one's genuine goods and act towards achieving them. It thus enables one both to live a flourishing life and to resist those social forces that pose a threat to individual and collective wellbeing. MacIntyre's work provides criticism of modern institutions and their threat to moral/practical agency. It also attempts to conceptualise a form of practice that would provide necessary resources for authentic moral agency under our present predicament.

As both a Marxist and an Aristotelian, MacIntyre attempts to give an account of practical rationality and political subjectivity necessary for human emancipation. Throughout different periods of his writing, MacIntyre keeps pointing to the need of a rational collective control of life and over the powers that tend to subjugate human actors for their own needs. Thus, as a Marxists, he seeks to conceptualize a form of activity that could realize humanist ideals and would resist the bureaucratic structures that impede and destroy such activity ("The problem of how to avoid falling prey to the bureaucracy is a permanent problem for socialists" [MacIntyre 2008h: 85]). In his later writings, he reformulates this problem as that between practical (moral) agency and social structures of manipulation. As Kelvin Knight puts it,

> as a Marxist and, now as an Aristotelian, MacIntyre understands the good of human actors to comprise their individual and collective control of their own activity. This is what he once simply called freedom, and what he now calls the good of independent practical reason. To be managed is to have this elemental good denied and negated. (Knight 2007: 115)

Approached this way, MacIntyre's works can be read from the perspective of emancipatory politics. Emancipation is understood as the elimination of various forms of oppression, whatever they are defined. So emancipatory theory aims to identify oppressive relations and emancipatory politics is the practical project of the elimination of those oppressive relations. Emancipatory theories necessary involves normative accounts of society without said forms of oppression; a vision of more just and equal social relations. Thus even if it is customary to present MacIntyre as a radical critic of modernity, MacIntyre is not anti-modernist.

In fact, his position towards modernity is characterised by the awareness of the struggles for emancipation:

> The history of modernity, insofar as it has been a series of social and political liberations and emancipations from arbitrary and oppressive rule, is indeed in key respects a history of genuine and admirable progress. The history of modernity, insofar as it has been a history of artistic and scientific achievement [...] is indeed a history of equally genuine and admirable achievement. [...] Yet it is this same modernity in which new forms of oppressive inequality, new types of material and intellectual impoverishment, and new frustrations and misdirections of desire have been recurrently generated. (MacIntyre 2016: 123-124)

Thus MacIntyre's works in moral philosophy and his neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics in particular should be understood as indentifying the specifically modern forces that misdirect and impoverish the powers of practical reasoning. Moral philosophy thus understood contributes to emancipatory political critique. The emancipatory political content of MacIntyre's works will be identified gradually throughout this dissertation.

To state it briefly, MacIntyre sees contemporary societies as arenas of power and manipulation. He advances his claim by providing a radical critique of contemporary moral language. That contemporary moral debates seem fragmented and never-ending, seemingly devoid of any prospect of reaching an agreement (MacIntyre 2007: 6), is not just a temporary setback in the otherwise rational debate; rather, it reveals something essential about the condition of moral language in contemporary societies. MacIntyre opens *After Virtue* with "a disquieting suggestion" that contemporary moral language is composed of a variety of concepts that have survived into modernity from previous social contexts that defined and informed them. This is the central claim of *After Virtue*: "What we possess [...] are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived". Contemporary moral vocabulary is only the "simulacra of morality" (MacIntyre 2007: 2). In other words, we continue to use moral language without noticing that the social contexts that used to define particular moral concepts are no longer there. MacIntyre thus radicalises an argument made by G. E. M. Anscombe in her influential essay "Modern Moral Philosophy". One of Anscombe's arguments is that the moral notion of "ought" is a remnant from the social life informed by religion and has become unintelligible in secular societies (Anscombe 1958). MacIntyre argues that our moral language is full of such relics and we continue to use them as if they had the same meaning as in their original contexts.

This is the post-Enlightenment moral predicament: MacIntyre claims that Enlightenment's attempts at providing rational justification for objective morality have failed and, as a result of this failure, modern societies are left with concepts from various competing theoretical frameworks. *After Virtue* is an attempt to make us aware of our own moral predicament. As one theory followed another without providing the sought-for rationally defendable universal morality, the grounds were prepared for Nietzsche's attack on moral language as such. MacIntyre gives a historical narrative of modern moral philosophy in which he traces the succession of unsuccessful attempts to ground objective morality in universalistic notions of reason (Kant), passion (Hume) or desire (Diderot). The failure of these projects eventually led to the emotivist[1] theory of morality. Emotivism, "the analytic, Anglophone analogue of the more vigorous moral philosophy of Nietzsche" (Knight 2007: 125) claims that moral language has no specific content and is reducible to subjective preferences:

> Emotivism is a doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character. (MacIntyre 2007: 11-12)

In other words, if someone claims something to be good or right, she/he does not claim anything else but that she or he likes it, supports it, prefers it. Moral utterances have no specific or objective content. Thus analytical philosophy comes to a conclusion about moral language that is very similar to Nietzsche's position that moral language is just the mask worn by the will to power. According to MacIntyre, it was the unsuccessful attempts of Enlightenment to provide an objective morality that created the grounds for emotivist and Nietzschean critiques of moral discourse: "Emotivism thus rests upon a claim that every attempt, whether past or present, to provide a rational justification of an objective morality has in fact failed" (ibid., 19). Modern individuals are left with moral cacophony. MacIntyre's next step is to argue that this condition has its consequences on the social realities of contemporary societies.

From the very beginning of his intellectual career, MacIntyre's approach to issues of modernity has been informed by a close historical reading of moral philosophy. To understand a particular moral language is to situate it in the history of particular societies whose social life is informed by and is reflected in its moral vocabulary. Starting with his first attempt to write a history of moral philosophy in *A Short History of Ethics* (1966/2002), MacIntyre protested

[1] In his latest book *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity,* MacIntyre designates new attempts to defend emotivist theory as expressivism: "Expressivism in its earlier and less philosophically sophisticated forms was known as emotivism" (MacIntyre 2016: 17). Despite these important developments in emotivist (expressivist) theory, MacIntyre maintains his line of critique.

against reading moral theories in ahistorical manner, as if concepts like right or good are universal in human history and mean the same thing for Plato and, for example, Kant (MacIntyre 2002: 1). Moral discourses cannot be separated from the social relationships that they inform, thus analytical reading of moral language is always limited. This central methodological presupposition set forth in *A Short History* is again reformulated in *After Virtue* (1981/2007): "A moral philosophy [...] presupposes sociology" (MacIntyre 2007: 23). This means that to understand the moral language of contemporary societies, we must understand how it functions in concrete social relations. It also means that developing an account of moral agency able to resist managerial manipulation requires coming up with not just another theory, but also an account of social relations where this practical agency could be embodied.

According to MacIntyre, emotivist moral language reflects the mode of life of a society in which the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations is increasingly obliterated (ibid., 24). If actions are based solely on subjective value preferences, then social interaction and other human beings can be understood simply as a means to satisfying personal preferences. The possibility of non-manipulative interpersonal relations has to be grounded in some appeal to standards that are external to particular individuals. But the existence of such standards is rejected by the emotivist doctrine and by modern Nietzchean genealogists. According to Peter McMylor, this is the "dark side of emotivism": "a self that has no criteria external to it, will impose itself on reality, perhaps by subtle manipulation, perhaps by rhetoric, but perhaps also by force!" (McMylor 1994: 27). Thus MacIntyre's characterisation of the modern predicament is in agreement with Nietzsche's and those of some later Nietzscheans such as Michel Foucault: modern societies are the societies of power and manipulation (see also Bielskis 2015: 63, Bielskis & Mardosas 2014).

MacIntyre advances his sociology of social characters to illustrate how the manipulative social relations are dominating in contemporary societies. MacIntyre argues that each epoch can be defined in part through its dominant social characters. Thus, Victorian England was defined by "the Public School Headmaster, the Explorer and the Engineer" and Wilhelmine Germany by "the Prussian Officer, the Professor and the Social Democrat" (MacIntyre 2007: 28). Characters are "the moral representatives of their culture", through them "moral and metaphysical ideas and theories" are embodied in the social world, they are "the masks worn by moral philosophies". A particular character "morally legitimates a mode of social existence" (ibid., 28-29). The characters that define our contemporary mode of existence are the Rich Aesthete, the Manager and the Therapist (ibid., 30). In the prologue to the third edition of *After Virtue,* MacIntyre adds the Conservative Moralist to the list of contemporary social characters (ibid., xv). They are all figures of contemporary elites manipulating social realities for their own interests. We can see

how both the Manager and the Therapist are concerned with technique and effectiveness: the Manager is interested in "transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labour into skilled labour, investment into profits", the Therapist in "transforming neurotic symptoms into directed energy, maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones" (MacIntyre 2007: 30). But they all come short of questioning the actual social world. They are not concerned with changing the world, but rather with making the actual world and individuals trapped in existing social relations function as effectively as possible. The Rich Aesthete represents the world of unrestrained consumption and a restless search for new ends to employ his unlimited means (ibid., 25). He also has no interest in questioning social realities and is concerned only with his egotistic self-gratification. The Conservative Moralist with his "inflated and self-righteous unironic rhetoric" (ibid., xv) is another character manipulating the structures of power for his own purposes. As MacIntyre observes, these characters dominate "the scripted conversations of the ruling elites of advanced modernity" (ibid).

MacIntyre argues that the bureaucratic rationality represents the obliteration of the distinction between manipulative and nonmanipulative relations. Bureaucratic rationality derives from the fact and value distinction, which is understood by MacIntyre to be characteristic to liberal modernity. A manager works with value free facts. Bureaucracy is a structure that embodies instrumental rationality of effectively applying means to reach given ends. The ends themselves are outside the scope of instrumental reasoning by bureaucratic managers. The rationality of bureaucratic structures concerns the means only, not the ends. Any agreement on the ends is also impossible in contemporary emotivist moral debates, as discussed above. So the inescapable question is the following: Who sets the ends and whose interest do the given ends serve? The answer, of course, is whoever has the power to impose their ends on bureaucratic structures. But all the ends of bureaucratic structures will be arbitrary: the emotivist nature of moral discourse precludes any rational normative agreement, so the ends pursued by bureaucratic structures will represent only the subjective interests of a particular social group or groups. MacIntyre agrees that his critical argument about moral agency in modernity comes very close to the theory of ideology. But in *After Virtue* he leaves the question of whose arbitrary will in the end be served by the bureaucratic power unanswered: "to answer that question is not my task here" (MacIntyre 2007: 110). Later, as I will argue in Chapter 5.2, MacIntyre accepts the traditional Marxist critique of state power: the bureaucratic structures of the modern state are fused with the power of capital.

MacIntyre's claim that modern societies are captured by bureaucratic manipulative structures applies to different societies irrespective of their ideological legitimation. It must be remembered that *After Virtue* was written in the last decade of the Cold War. For a long time,

MacIntyre associated himself with Marxism and one of the central Marxist political ideas was the withering away of the state. MacIntyre argues that Marxism has failed to introduce different political structures and, in the end, has reproduced the same managerial power:

> as Marxists organize and move toward power they always do and have become Weberians in substance, even if they remain Marxists in rhetoric; for in our culture we know of no organized movement towards power which is not bureaucratic and managerial in mode and we know of no justifications for authority which are not Weberian in form. And if this is true of Marxism when it is on the road to power, how much more so is it the case when it arrives. All power tends to coopt and absolute power coopts absolutely. (MacIntyre 2007: 109)

The characterisation of modern societies in *After Virtue* is pessimistic. Relations of manipulation dominate and are institutionalized in bureaucratic structures, while individuals are left with impoverished moral language that is unable to provide effective resources to resist relations of manipulation. From his early Marxist period on, MacIntyre has insisted that morality reduced to purely individual choice has no meaning. Only by pointing to something beyond the individual, something that is shared among individuals and can be rationally defended, can moral language have its binding force. Looking back on his own philosophical development, especially his early attempt to write a history of morality in *A Short History of Ethics*, MacIntyre remarks:

> The notion of choosing one's own morality makes no sense. What *does* make sense is the much more radical notion of choosing to displace and overcome morality. So *A Short History of Ethics* should perhaps have ended by giving Nietzsche the final word […]. (MacIntyre 1998a: 261)

Émile Perreau-Saussine rightfully reminds that we must not overlook the fact that MacIntyre and post-modern philosophers like Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida belong to the same generation of intellectuals: the generation that embraced Nietzsche's criticism of Enlightenment (Perreau-Sausinne 2011: 147). Post-moderns have turned to Nietzsche and the negative project of continuous unmasking and subversion of moral categories in order to eschew any totalizing projects that enslave the individual. MacIntyre refers to the neo-Nietzchean project as "a kind of intellectual and social guerrilla warfare" (MacIntyre 2006b: 120). While MacIntyre largely accepts the Nietzchean diagnosis of modernity, he develops a political project clearly distinct from the neo-Nietzschean trajectory.

In the middle of *After Virtue* MacIntyre raises the question: Nietzsche or Aristotle? If MacIntyre's critique of modern moral language is correct, then the path taken by contemporary

Nietzscheans may be the only alternative way to resist arbitrary power. MacIntyre's project aims to find a way to revive a positive moral-political project: to conceptualize a form of moral language and corresponding social practice that would allow individuals to resist the manipulative forces of emotivist modernity. If such a project is impossible, then Nietzsche has the final word.

In his account of the disintegration of moral discourse, MacIntyre traces the history of moral philosophy back to the point when modern philosophy emerged by breaking with Aristotelian metaphysics. The moderns were, of course, correct to reject it. But, MacIntyre argues, by rejecting metaphysics they also rejected Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle's version of ethics and later Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages were founded on the metaphysical account of human nature. According to MacIntyre, it was a mistake to reject both ethics and metaphysics. MacIntyre argues that the Aristotelian ethical theory of virtues was exactly that ethical language that was grounded in everyday experiences of individuals and allowed them to critically question the goals of their lives and of their political communities.

The rejection of Aristotelianism and the subsequent failed attempts to construct a universal foundation for ethics paved the way for emotivist conclusions and corresponding social consequences. One of the central arguments of *After Virtue* is that emotivism was correct as a theory of the use of moral language in modernity, but it fails as a theory of the meaning of moral language (MacIntyre 2007: 18). Emotivism says much about how moral discourse is used in contemporary societies, but it does not follow from this that any moral vocabulary in any social setting is reducible to emotivist claims. MacIntyre argues that the Aristotelian framework could still be revived as an attractive alternative to the Nietzschean project. MacIntyre's project is an attempt to escape post-modernist philosophy by embracing modernised non-metaphysical Aristotelian ethics.

The way out of contemporary moral and social predicament, argues MacIntyre, rests on reformulating Aristotle's ethical theory on very different grounds than Aristotle himself did. Aristotelian ethics is based on what MacIntyre calls the "core theory of virtues". The Aristotelian virtue theory is composed of three elements: man-as-he-happens-to-be, man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-essential-nature, and ethics as a practical science of how to move from the initial condition of untutored human nature towards the realisation of human potentiality (MacIntyre 2007: 52). But such a conception is only possible if there is a shared vision of human ends that could be referred to in order to justify ethical standards. These ends were discerned in pre-modern societies from the metaphysical conceptions of the world and human nature. MacIntyre argues that Aristotelian teleological virtue ethics can be reconceptualised in modern terms without metaphysical presuppositions. In *After Virtue*

MacIntyre offers to replace metaphysical accounts of human nature with the theory of practices, narratives and traditions.

In his prologue to the third edition of *After Virtue* MacIntyre adds how emotivism is embodied in the characters of modern elites. The Aristotelian tradition of virtues, on the contrary, exists in the everyday lives of ordinary people (MacIntyre 2007: xv). Thus there is a class element in modern discourse: emotivism is embodied in the dominant power structures and the life of elites, while the virtue tradition informs the alternative life of common people. MacIntyre's own project has been to conceptualise a non-elitist theory based on everyday experiences of ordinary people; a theory that makes use of the resources for resistance available to them. The possibility for rational critique of the ends of human actions and various institutions is necessary to resist the manipulative powers of contemporary political institutions. Virtue ethics grounded in practices, narratives and traditions thus provide necessary moral resources for individuals to rationally direct their own lives.

1.2. Practices, institutions and virtues

In *After Virtue* MacIntyre introduces a sociological distinction between practices and institutions in order to conceptualise those moral resources of resistance that are available in every-day social interactions. In MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian theory, the term "practice" means

> any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (MacIntyre 2007: 187)

Practice is activity performed in cooperation; it involves relations with others. Practice is complex, cohesive and socially established. MacIntyre's examples of practices are football, chess, architecture, farming, scientific enquiries, painting, music, etc. Activities described by these examples have their histories and their standards of excellence. They have their moments of flourishing and also periods of degeneration. Practices must be distinguished from singular acts done with skill. So, using MacIntyre's examples, throwing a ball with skill, bricklaying, or planting a tree are not practices, but football, architecture or farming are (ibid.). Of course, these singular acts are parts of practices, but practice is a much broader category and cannot be reduced to those singular acts.

The distinction between internal and external goods helps to explain better what practice is. Internal goods are the goods of excellence; they are constitutive of the practice and cannot be pursued independently from it. These goods cannot be understood separately from a particular practice as they partly define that practice. Those goods are discovered by taking part in the practice and acquiring necessary experience (MacIntyre 2007: 188-189). Each practice has its own specific internal goods. So the goods of music are different from the goods of painting or gardening.

External goods are money, status, prestige, power. They are "externally and contingently attached" to a particular practice "by the accidents of social circumstance" (ibid., 188). They can be reached by a variety of means. They are also limited: for example, financing one project means less money to something else. Internal goods, on the contrary, are not limited and anyone engaged in a practice can enjoy them. We can sum up the difference between these two types of goods with an example: anyone who learns to play the piano can enjoy the satisfaction that playing and improving their skill bring, but only some pianists are awarded with fame and money. There is no necessary direct correlation between the two, it is always possible (and is sometimes the case) that the one who earns more money is not necessarily the better player.

To achieve internal goods, some measure of external ones is required. Without them a practice would not survive over time. External goods are secured through institutions. But, on the other hand, institutions pose a potential threat to practices: "the ideal and creativity of practice are always vulnerable to the competitiveness of institution" (ibid., 194). Institutions tend to undermine the internal goods of practice by subjugating the particular practice to the pursuit of external goods. If practice becomes oriented only to securing external goods, the internal standards of excellence may degenerate. Institutions may cripple the creativity of a practice in order to keep the measure of external goods. Thus the uneasy tension between the two has to be accounted for.

By pursuing the internal goods of practices, individuals develop virtues and extend their human powers. Virtues receive their first definition through practices: "*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*" (ibid., 191, italics in the original). Virtues are needed to protect the internal goods of practices from the corruption of institutions. Thus they play an important part in managing the tension between practices and institutions by sustaining the well-being of practice. According to MacIntyre, "without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corruptive power of institutions" (MacIntyre 2007: 194). MacIntyre's account of practices, their internal goods and virtues show how efforts to achieve and sustain internal goods of practice

depend on moral development. According to Kelvin Knight, "practices serve as schools of the virtues" (Knight 2007: 152).

In his later work *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) MacIntyre introduces the concepts of goods of excellence and goods of effectiveness. The distinction between the two types of goods echoes his earlier distinction in *After Virtue* between internal and the external goods. Goods of excellence are those goods that are internal to specific practices. Each practice has a concept of what it means to be good, to excel, at this particular activity. The relationship of teaching and learning, of "disciplined apprenticeship" is essential to sustain and advance practices. Anyone engaging in a practice has to learn the standards of excellence that have existed until now in order to become an independent practitioner. As MacIntyre puts it:

> because initially we lack important qualities of mind, body, and character necessary both for excellent performance and for informed and accurate judgment about excellence in performance, we have to put ourselves into the hands of the competent to transform us into the kind of people who will be able both to perform well and to judge well. (MacIntyre 1988: 30)

This process of education is also a process of self-transformation. Through it we learn, according to MacIntyre, to make two types of distinctions: first, "between what merely seems to be good to us here now and what really is good relative to us here now" and, second, "between what is good relative to us here now and what is good or best unqualifiedly" (ibid.). The first ability is retrospective, it can be reformulated as the ability to identify and explain our past mistakes in a rational way. The second distinction gives an understanding of what is the best performance so far, what it means to achieve mastery in a particular practice. Practices are thus teleological, because they aim at what is the best so far in a practice: "The concept of the best, of the perfected, provides each of these forms of activity with the good towards which those who participate in it move" (ibid. 31).

Practices and internal goods that correspond to them have their own history; our idea of what is a good musical composition, or what is excellent architecture, develops and changes over time. The driving force of the participants is not just to achieve the best performance so far, but also "to transcend the limitations of the best achievement in that particular area so far and the acknowledgement of certain achievements as permanently defining aspects of the perfection towards which that particular form of activity is directed" (ibid.). The internal goods of practices as conceived by MacIntyre are not defined once and for all, they are open to constant change and improvement, they can always be transcended, to be perfected even further, even revolutionised in particular situations. To excel in some particular practice means much more

than following the rules of that practice: "achievement proceeds both by rule-keeping and by rule-breaking" (MacIntyre 1988: 31).

Goods of excellence differ from goods of effectiveness in much the same way as internal goods differ from external goods. Goods of effectiveness are "such goods as those of riches, power, status, and prestige, goods which can be and are objects of desire by human beings prior to and independently of any desire for excellence" (ibid., 32). Pursuit of goods of excellence requires education and developing virtues; pursuit of goods of effectiveness requires developing those skills that help one to be an effective player in the competition for limited external goods:

> What qualities of body, mind, and character are generally required to achieve such goods as those of riches, power, status, and prestige? They are those which, in the circumstances in which a given person finds him or herself, enable that person both to identify which means will be effective in securing such goods and to be effective in utilizing those means to secure them. (ibid.)

The skills that are necessary for securing goods of effectiveness are essentially qualities required for winning. They are the skills necessary to reach the ends that are already given and as such "they are potential means to either good or bad ends" (Knight 2007: 164).

It would be a mistake to think of goods of effectiveness and goods of excellence as mutually exclusive. MacIntyre argues in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* that cultivating goods of excellence systematically is not possible without goods of effectiveness, and that it is quite difficult to pursue goods of effectiveness without pursuing goods of excellence at least to some degree (MacIntyre 1988: 35). In the same manner, practices cannot flourish without institutions and external goods they provide. Thus external goods are necessary to sustain practices. Since we cannot sustain practices without some institutions, we cannot achieve internal goods without some measure of external ones.

This distinction between internal goods of practices and external goods of institutions is MacIntyre's central sociological insight. Kelvin Knight argues that the revolutionary potential of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism lies in this very distinction. MacIntyre's sociology is one that focuses not on institutions and their interrelations, but on practices. Practices have analytical precedence over institutions: "Society's more elemental constituents are practices, not institutions" (Knight 2007: 145). To reason in terms of practice and their internal goods is different from instrumental, external-goods-oriented reasoning of institutions. Practices and institutions may come into conflict, especially under capitalism which increasingly subordinates various practices to the dictates of profit. Prioritizing practice over institution also means that in

order to sustain the flourishing of a particular practice, institutions may need to be reformed or changed radically. Various institutions are becoming integrated into global capitalism to an increasing extent, thus practitioners seeking to sustain the vitality of their practice may find themselves in conflict with a broad institutional setting encompassing local, national and international levels.

MacIntyre's theory of practices and institutions points to the conflictual nature of contemporary societies. On the one hand, institutional logic tends to subjugate the creativity of practice for the single pursuit of external goods. On the other hand, practices are oriented towards creativity and the pursuit of internal goods. Institutions are not benevolent in themselves and they do not naturally serve the needs of practices. They can do so only if they are subordinated to the needs of practices. Moral and intellectual resources are necessary for the successful resistance against institutional oppression. From this perspective, virtues can be subversive. Knight points to this subversive moment: "moral education should prepare individuals for social and intellectual conflict" (Knight 2007: 163).

1.3. Narratives and traditions

MacIntyre argues that practices provide only a primary locus for the development of virtues. Through practices, virtues receive their first, but not complete, definition; only in the wider context of individual and collective narratives do virtues receive their fuller embodiment. Virtues, although learned through practices, are acquired characteristics of human life that are exhibited not only by engaging in a particular practice, but in all human interactions. Thus virtues must have a *telos* in terms of individual life. Virtues are necessary to achieve internal goods of a particular practice, but they are also necessary to achieve goods that define individual life as a whole, i.e. to lead a flourishing life. Such unity of individual life is conceptualised in terms of a narrative. Thus MacIntyre proposes "a concept of selfhood whose unity resides in a unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as a narrative beginning to middle to end" (ibid., 205).

MacIntyre's proposition is to regard human actions as "enacted narratives" (ibid., 211). The meaning of a particular action can only be understood if we consider the intentions of actors. But to understand the intentions, we have to refer to a broader set of narratives – both of the agents concerned and of the setting in which they act (MacIntyre 2007: 211). Only in a context of these broader narratives are particular acts intelligible. Human actions are always situated in a particular history or several intercepting histories. They are moments in such histories (ibid., 214).

This means that we, as human beings, understand ourselves and our lives in terms of a story (a narrative). We live out our narratives: "Stories are lived before they are told" (ibid., 212). An individual is both an actor in and an author of such a narrative. Of course, each individual is author only in part – individual narratives do not unfold in a void, they intercept with and are constrained by other narratives. The beginning of an individual narrative is already shaped by what was before: by the social milieu one is born into. So there is always a tension between individual authorship of her or his narrative and the social constraints that she or he encounters.

MacIntyre's account of human life in terms of narrative aims to reject sociological explanations of action that aspire to predict human behaviour by focusing on external constrains and their effects on what people do. To the extent that we are rational agents with at least partial control over our actions, there is always an element of unpredictability. Thus MacIntyre's social teleology is also an attack on a particular type of social science. MacIntyre has always seen positivist social sciences that seek to explain the actions of social agents by constructing broad causal models of social interactions as an ideological mask of bureaucratic power (MacIntyre 1998c). Such a social science becomes a tool for manipulating society by conceiving that behaviours of social actors could be explained away as effects of external factors. It also implies that actions can be predicted if one has the right tools and measurements. If explanatory models constructed by this kind of science show that factor X tends to increase the likelihood that people will behave in manner A, then the stability of social system can be controlled and maintained by carefully manipulating these causal factors. Against such social science MacIntyre invokes Marx's third theses on Feuerbach. With this theses Marx pointed out that such "materialism" necessarily divides society into two groups: the manipulated and the manipulators (MacIntyre 2007: 84-85).

MacIntyre's narrative conception of the self is an attempt to save the rational powers of ordinary individuals to consciously direct their own lives. To become just a passive agent is to fail as a practical agent. It is true, a due weight has to be given to social constrains. The conflict between those social constraints and individual narratives is an important source of education in the moral and intellectual development of individuals.

Reason and goal-directedness are essential elements of narratives. Every narrative contains visions of possible futures and further goals, it always points beyond the present:

> There is no present which is not informed by some vision of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form of a *telos* – or of variety of ends or goals –

> towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present. (MacIntyre 2007: 215-216)

Teleology does not deny unpredictability; the two co-exist in any particular narrative. There are constraints to where the story can go, but there are also many ways in which it can unravel within these constraints. Stories are also stories of conflicts and crossroads. So human being is "essentially a story-telling animal" (ibid., 216). Story lends unity and continuity to individual lives. It points to certain goals that provide a meaning for individual narratives, a meaning and directedness captured in the question "what is the good of my life?". MacIntyre proposes to understand human life as a quest:

> The unity of human life is the unity of a narrative quest. Quests sometimes fail, are frustrated, abandoned or dissipated into distractions; and human lives may in all these ways also fail. But the only criteria for success or failure in a human life as a whole are the criteria of success or failure in a narrated or to-be-narrated quest. (ibid., 219)

The aim of such a quest is to find what the good of one's life is. MacIntyre's historicised account of the human good is here in clear evidence: *the* good is not something inscribed in the essential human nature and discovered by some metaphysical (or theological) enquiry; human life itself is a guest to discover such good. MacIntyre describes such a quest as education in self-knowledge. Virtues find their place in this quest as dispositions that sustain it, that enable us to overcome various obstacles; they also increase our self-knowledge and our knowledge of the good (ibid., 219). So the sphere of virtues is expanded from practices to that of a person's entire life. To answer the question of the human good, there is no need to ground it in a metaphysical account of human nature. After discussing narratives and virtues, MacIntyre offers his "provisional conclusion" about what is the good life for human being: "the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man" (ibid.).

The narrative conception of self may be seen as a response to a feature of modern social life that MacIntyre calls compartmentalisation. Compartmentalisation means the division of human life into different spheres, each with its own characteristic modes of behaviour and rules. Economics, family life, politics, etc. become separate spheres of human activity. As these spheres, governed by their own distinct sets of rules, become more and more independent from one another, individual life becomes increasingly fragmented. The more individuals try to integrate themselves into these independent spheres, the more difficult it becomes for a particular individual to understand her life as a whole. "And all these separations have been

achieved so that it is the distinctiveness of each and not the unity of the life of the individual who passes through these parts that we are taught to think and feel" (MacIntyre 2007: 204). Compartmentalised social relations create compartmentalised personality. MacIntyre argues that the "happiness industry" of contemporary societies is symptomatic of the effects of compartmentalisation: Aristotelian questions "What would it be for my life *as a whole* to be a flourishing life?" and "What is my good *qua* human being and not just *qua* role-player in this or that type of situation?" disappear and are replaced by such questions as "What do I feel about my life?", "Am I happy or unhappy?", in other words, questions about the human good are transformed into questions about psychological states of subjective satisfaction (MacIntyre 2011a: 12-13).

Charles Taylor in his *Sources of the Self* (1989) argued how the turn inwards and self-reflectivity is one of the main sources for modern self-understanding. The human good in traditional societies was defined by the rational enquiry into the metaphysical structure of the world and human place within it. Modern self-understanding evolved with the end of traditional metaphysical systems and was grounded in self-questioning into what gives meaning and directedness to particular lives. MacIntyre's argument about narrative quests proceeds in the similar line. But the political significance of MacIntyre's line of thought derives from the fact that he shows how such self-questioning is effectively precluded in the compartmentalised emotivist societies.

MacIntyre's conceptualisation of individual life in terms of narrative unity offers an alternative to the sociological reduction of individual to her/his social roles. Just as MacIntyre juxtaposes the sociology of institutions with the concept of practice and its internal goods, so again he sets the sociology of social roles against the need to understand individual life in terms of unity, goods and virtues. So, for example, he engages critically with Erwin Goffman's work, where social life is reduced to an interaction among different social roles and individual personality is left outside the considerations of a sociologist (MacIntyre 2007: 115-117). We see here another level of conflict in contemporary societies: between the narrative quest for the good life and the compartmentalised social reality which fetters individual self-reflectivity and divides social world into distinct and autonomous spheres. As McMylor points, successful resistance and the possibility of rebuilding moral communities in MacIntyre's account rests on these ineliminable narrative elements of human consciousness (McMylor 1994: 30).

MacIntyre completes his historical account of virtues and the human good with the concept of tradition. We do not live isolated lives; our quests for the good of our personal narratives intersect with the narratives of other individuals, families, and communities. This makes us a part of broader narratives that MacIntyre refers to as traditions.

MacIntyre's concept of tradition challenges Enlightenment's opposition between reason and tradition. Tradition in MacIntyre's work does not mean something that exists before reason, something that reason has to liberate itself from. As he observes, "when tradition becomes Burkean, it is always dead or dying" (MacIntyre 2007: 222). MacIntyre's notion of tradition is based on the idea of continuous enquiry, of continuous debate about the meaning and values of that particular tradition. Good tradition always contains within itself an element of conflict, a continuous need for self-questioning, a need to define and redefine itself. In such traditions, the goods of our practices, our narrative quests and virtues find their final definition. MacIntyre summarises his notion of tradition and its relation to narrative and practice in the following way:

> A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations. Hence the individual's search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual's life is a part, and this is true both of those goods which are internal to practices and of the goods of a single life. Once again the narrative phenomenon of embedding is crucial: the history of a practice in our time is generally and characteristically embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger and longer history of the tradition through which the practice in its present form was conveyed to us; the history of each of our own lives is generally and characteristically embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger and longer histories of a number of traditions. (ibid.)

Practices are susceptible to deterioration and virtues are those dispositions that sustain the well-being of practices. The narrative quest for the good life is also sustained by virtues and the same applies to tradition. Traditions too have their own histories marked by moments of flourishing as well as the danger of decay and disintegration. The same virtues that sustain practices and narrative quests also sustain the well-being of tradition (MacIntyre 2007: 223). A further comment of MacIntyre's illustrates how his notion of tradition differs from the dominant conservative usage of the term. MacIntyre describes living tradition as a "not-yet-complete narrative" (ibid.). Traditions, much like individual narratives, are open in the sense that they are not circumscribed by their past once and for all; aware of its own origins, conscious of its past, tradition looks to the future. Thus the notion of the good that MacIntyre situates in practices, individual narratives and traditions is open-ended, it demands to be continuously questioned, contested and redefined.

Traditions have their histories of birth, growth, conflict, deterioration or death. One tradition may come into conflict with another and be superseded by a superior tradition.

MacIntyre models his account of tradition after the debate between Kuhn, Lakatos and others about progress in science (see Lutz 2012). Traditions, understood in MacIntyre's terms, come into their epistemological crisis when they can no longer adequately reflect and inform individual lives. When a tradition comes into crisis, the social relations it sustains are also affected: "an epistemological crisis is always a crisis in human relationships" (MacIntyre 2006a: 5). Imagine a catholic losing his faith and eventually embracing a secular worldview, or a Marxist horrified by the crimes of Stalinism and eventually rejecting Marxist philosophy and becoming a religious conservative. These are examples of how an individual may break with one tradition and embrace another. Such breaks involve epistemological crises: one has to look for a different vocabulary to make sense of the world. But it also involves, and this is an important argument by MacIntyre, a crisis in relationships: one leaves behind not only an earlier worldview, but also friends and social relations that were sustained by the shared vocabulary. Such crises can also affect entire human societies: consider the crisis of human relationships experienced after the breaking of the Soviet Union and the embrace of democracy and capitalism that required remodelling social interactions on a completely new vocabulary and new expectations.

MacIntyre understands individual and social life in teleological terms, but his interpretation of history in non-teleological. There is neither necessity historical development nor the inevitable end of human history. Thus MacIntyre in *After Virtue* constructs a narrative not of moral progress, but of a series of philosophical failures that have led not to a higher synthesis, but to the gradual disintegration of moral discourse. History in MacIntyre's later works is seen as composed of competing and conflicting traditions, without any historically necessary movement:

> Indeed we are sometimes told that it is no more than idle and undisciplined speculation to ask, what else could have happened? What other possibilities might have been, but were not realized? The prohibition upon asking such questions is always ideological in its effect. For, if effective, it functions to conceal from view the fact that our predecessors did in the past confront real alternative possibilities, that there were roads not taken which might have been taken, and that the character of the roads that were in fact taken cannot be fully understood unless it is recognized that taking them involved a rejection of or a defeat for those other possibilities. The present could have been other than it is and to assume differently may always hide from us some of its important characteristics. (MacIntyre, 2006c: 42)

There is nothing necessary in the development of history and in particular institutions that we happen to live with. Thus history for MacIntyre is marked by conflicts and real choices

between alternative trajectories. Thus there is no necessary outcome to the conflict that MacIntyre mentions in the quote above. An important feature of history, as understood by MacIntyre, is that even though traditions are embodied in particular social environments, they still can survive and redefine themselves in a completely different social setting:

> The historical particularities of traditions, the fact that each is only to be appropriated by a relationship to a particular contingent history, does not of itself mean that those histories cannot extend to and even flourish in environments not only different form but even hostile to those in which a tradition was originally at home. (MacIntyre 1988: 392)

MacIntyre's account of social teleology is an attempt to resurrect the Aristotelian tradition of virtues in modern terms, i.e. to conceive of the continuation of the Aristotelian tradition in a hostile social setting. Even though instrumental rationality of bureaucratic structures dominates contemporary social life, Aristotelian resources for resistance are always here. MacIntyre's account of moral agency and modernity open up a space for social conflict and resistance, a conflict between practices and institutions, individual narratives and compartmentalised social existence, and among multiple traditions. The Aristotelian tradition of virtues survives in the form of these struggles.

1.4. Moral agency and social structures

We can now sum up the discussion on MacIntyre's conception of what type of moral and intellectual resources are needed to successfully question existing social relations. Through practice, individuals learn to achieve various goods of excellence and expand their moral and intellectual powers. The powers are necessary to better understand what those internal goods are and also to resist the corrupting influence of institutions. By rational self-questioning and enquiry into their own life narratives, individuals raise questions about the goods that define their lives. And such questioning is situated within and sustained by well-functioning traditions. Such reasoning is reasoning about ends (goods): ends of practices, ends of various social roles and individual lives taken as a whole. The possibility of rational enquiry into ends is necessary for human beings to lead flourishing and meaningful lives.

MacIntyre's analysis of modern societies shows that they are not the sites for such rational enquiry. As far as the arguments in *After Virtue* are concerned, MacIntyre's take on the possibility of independent moral agency in modern societies remains pessimistic. He points out how education into virtues is provided through various grass-root projects aimed at achieving

some common good. Examples of such projects include "the founding and carrying forward of a school, a hospital or an art gallery" (MacIntyre 2007: 151). But he claims that virtues flourish only on the margins of the dominant culture. MacIntyre argues that human beings can lead flourishing lives only in a particular type of community: "a community whose primary bond is a shared understanding both of the good for man and of the good of that community and where individuals identify their primary interests with reference to those goods" (ibid: 250). *After Virtue* ends with a call to build such communities.

Knight summarises essential development of MacIntyre's post-*After Virtue* thought: the concept of tradition was developed further into a metatheory of rationality meant to challenge Enlightenment's notion of reason, while as the third sociological element in the theory of virtues MacIntyre introduced "the goods of community" (Knight 2007: 151). So MacIntyre's subsequent works (*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*) expand and develop his account of reasoning within a tradition and his historical-philosophical reconstructions of several such traditions. The question of a political community and especially the question of specific forms of politics in *After Virtue* were only briefly sketched.

In an important essay "Social structures and their threats to moral agency" (MacIntyre 2006e), MacIntyre advances his arguments about what type of social setting is necessary for the development of moral agency. The central argument in this essay is that such social setting must create conditions for collective questioning into a variety of goods individuals are pursuing. To understand oneself as a moral agent at the level of everyday practice, MacIntyre argues, is to understand oneself and to present oneself to others as having an identity separate from one's social roles; it means to understand oneself and the other as practically rational and accountable not only in their social roles but also as rational individuals (MacIntyre 2006e: 191). This in turn requires critical scrutiny of our own lives, the ability to question what goods one is pursuing. It requires a particular type of social relations where questioning and accountability are sustained:

> We need therefore to have tested our capacity for moral deliberation and judgment in this and that type of situation by subjecting our arguments and judgments systematically to the critical scrutiny of reliable others, of co-workers, family, friends. Such others, of course, are not themselves always reliable and some may influence us in ways that strengthen the propensity to error. So to have confidence in our deliberations and judgments we need social relationships of a certain kind, forms of social association in and through which our deliberations and practical judgments are subjected to extended and systematic critical questioning. (ibid.)

The necessity for such accountability is made evident when we start to consider how specific social roles may be detrimental to the interests of other people. Let's say, someone's

work is to promote the interests of a tobacco company: if she reasons only as the player of this role, she will judge as good performance those actions that satisfy the interests of the company (which, almost exclusively, is growth in profits). It is a form of reasoning in terms of means and not ends; a type of reasoning concerned with goods of effectiveness. But to make judgments about what kind of good this particular social role is directed at, and how it relates to the goods of the wider community, involves the ability to question one's social role, to reason not as the player of a particular role, but as a genuine moral agent. MacIntyre points how in contemporary societies a person as a player of different social roles is not required to evaluate those roles in broader terms of individual and common goods. Thus to know more than one's social role requires, to question those social roles is essential for moral agency in the contemporary world. As MacIntyre puts it,

> 'Ask about any social and cultural order what it needs its inhabitants not to know' has become an indispensable sociological maxim. 'Ask about your own social and cultural order what it needs you and others not to know' has become an indispensable moral maxim. (MacIntyre 2006e: 194)

Thus moral agency creates tension and conflict between the requirements of virtue and human flourishing on the one hand and established social roles on the other. As argued above, to be a moral agent one needs a social setting where various social roles can be questioned. As MacIntyre points out, the intensity of this conflict between the requirements of moral agency and established social roles will vary in different social orders (ibid.). We can conclude without exaggeration that, in the contemporary compartmentalised societies where manipulative relations dominate, virtue will generate moral conflicts so acute that its resolution in favour of virtue will require drastic social changes. This conflict, if serious enough, may also result in the decision by particular individuals to eschew moral questions altogether, thus diminishing moral agency even more. But the conflict may also be a source of moral development: "it is from these tensions and conflicts, when and insofar as they are present, that morality gets an important part of its content" (ibid., 193). Such sustained collective enquiry into various goods was first developed as an essential feature of a flourishing tradition. Now MacIntyre positions such questioning as a feature of specific social structures.

Dependent Rational Animals (MacIntyre 1999) develops the argument about social and political structures in which individual and common goods could be rationally pursued. MacIntyre's position has changed since the time he presented his social teleology in *After Virtue*. His conception of man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-*telos* was grounded in history without any appeal to human nature. But *Dependent Rational Animals* gives an account of

practical reasoning and virtues that is based on what MacIntyre calls "metaphysical biology". In this book, the movement from man-as-he-happens-to-be towards man-as-he-could-be-if-realised-his-*telos* is reformulated as a movement from animal-like dependency towards being an independent practical reasoner.

Dependent Rational Animals argues that our ability to be independent practical reasoners is the result of a long process by which we move from bodily and intellectual dependence on others to truly independent reasoning. To be an independent practical reasoner is necessary for human flourishing; it means being able to rationally account for the goods one seeks to achieve. To reason independently means "the ability and willingness to evaluate the reasons for action advanced to one by others, so that one makes oneself accountable for one's endorsements of the practical conclusions of others as well as for one's own conclusions" (MacIntyre 1999: 105). But practical reasoning is reasoning with others, reasoning "within some determined set of social relations" (ibid., 107). Thus MacIntyre points that our becoming independent practical reasoners is a process that very much depends on social relations that sustain individual development: "We become independent practical reasoners through participation in a set of social relationships to certain others who are able to give us what we need" (ibid., 99). Those relationships are described as networks of giving and receiving. As children, in old age or in illness and many other situations throughout our lives, we are dependent on others who can give us what we need. Our ability to cope with challenges we face and to flourish as human beings is essentially dependent on such networks. We need education, care, help and support of various kinds when facing different challenges and during our development towards true independence.

MacIntyre argues that these relationships of giving and receiving are essentially asymmetrical; they cannot be understood as an exchange of goods or services. Sometimes we receive more than we are able to give and we give to those who are not able to give back. Such relationships enable individuals to flourish and sustain the quest for the good life. As MacIntyre argues, our individual flourishing is dependent on the flourishing of these social relations through which we receive what is necessary for our development: "For we cannot have a practically adequate understanding of our own good, of our own flourishing, apart from and independently of the flourishing of that whole set of social relationships in which we have found our place" (MacIntyre 1999: 108).

Thus *Dependent Rational Animals* supplements the account of virtues in *After Virtue* in a very important way. The question of the human good in MacIntyre's earlier book is considered through practices, individual and collective narratives. In the later book, MacIntyre adds an account of objective human needs. Human flourishing requires a type of social relations where the needs can be acknowledged and satisfied. Thus while virtues in *After Virtue* are nurtured

through practices, individual and collective narratives, in *Dependent Rational Animals* MacIntyre adds "the virtues of acknowledged dependence" that allow us to respond to the needs of others.

MacIntyre also describes "the social and political structures of the common good" that could embody the networks of giving and receiving through which individuals can satisfy their needs and develop their powers of independent reasoning. Such structures will necessary be small-scale and local. They will have to create institutional forms of shared deliberation where decisions about issues important for the community could be reached collectively. A genuine political community of good life must also incorporate, MacIntyre argues, Marx's two formulas of justice: justice in the socialist society, according to which "what each receives is proportionate to what each contributes"; and justice in the communist society that Marx sums up as "from each according to her or his ability, to each, as far as possible, according to her or his needs" (MacIntyre 1999: 129-130). The formula of socialist justice would guide the relations among independent practical reasoners. Communist justice would guide the relations between those who can contribute and those who are in need: it is a justice for the networks of giving and receiving. Socialist justice accepts the equality of contribution and rewards, a reciprocal relation; communist justice acknowledges the priority of needs, especially in times of illness, infancy, and old age. MacIntyre calls for building communities of good life here and now and accepts that the requirements of these formulas will be met only imperfectly because of limited material resources. Nevertheless, these formulas of justice are essential to any community that takes the notion of human needs seriously (ibid.). Such an ideal community would create maximally favourable conditions for individuals to develop their powers as moral agents, to rationally enquire into their goods and the common goods of political association.

MacIntyre thus connects his account of practical rationality with local social and political structures. Knight argues that the focus on locality is not essential to MacIntyre's ethico-political project and that Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory should be developed further on the grounds of practice. Practice itself provides a form of community necessary to resist the powers of manipulation:

> the rationale for MacIntyre's social theory of practices is that the bases of these certain forms of community are to be found no longer in locality, but rather in particular practices. Accordingly, the tasks of politics in Aristotelian tradition are to defend rationality, ideals, creativity, and cooperative care for common goods of practices against institutional corruption and managerial manipulation, and to uphold internal goods of excellence against external goods and claims of effectiveness. […] It is therefore in the collective defence of the goods and rationalities of

> practices against those of institutions that the base for a politics in Aristotelian tradition are now to be found. (Knight 2011: 32)

Knight's arguments are important but before addressing them it is imperative to note a crucial aspect of locality in MacIntyre's works. Throughout his writings MacIntyre's insists that social relations necessary for human flourishing require specific institutions at the local level. However, he acknowledges the possible dangers posed by communitarian relations:

> It is a [...] mistake to suppose that there is anything good about the community as such. The relatively small-scale character and the face-to face encounters and conversations of local community are necessary for the shared achievement of the common goods of those who participate in the rational deliberation needed to sustain networks of giving and receiving, but, absent the virtues of just generosity and of shared deliberation, local communities are always open to corruption by narrowness, by complacency, by prejudice against outsiders and by a whole range of other deformities, including those that arise from a cult of local community. (MacIntyre 1999: 142)

MacIntyre repeatedly rejects any attempts to frame his work as a form of communitarianism: "I am not a communitarian. I do not believe in ideals or forms of community as a nostrum for contemporary social ills" (MacIntyre 1998a: 265). Thus MacIntyre argues for a specific form of open participatory local structures, local communities that embody the shared questioning into the nature of individual and common goods. Locality is very important for MacIntyre's political theory and a question remains whether it is possible to dissociate practical rationality embodied in practices from specific local structures of political organisation.

Nevertheless, the problematic aspect of the local community raised by Knight should be acknowledged. The provisional discussion in this section reveals that MacIntyre himself connects intimately his account of moral agency with a specific form of political community. But MacIntyre's insistence that he is not idealising local community may seem to be contradictory. To understand what kind of politics is envisaged in Revolutionary Aristotelianism, one must develop in greater detail an account of neo-Aristotelian political structures. The following chapters will look into how MacIntyre constructs his Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory by linking insights from his reading of Aristotle, Aquinas and Marx; how his turn to locality is informed by perceived failures of the Marxist political project. This will allow us to consider more systematically the form of politics envisaged in MacIntyre's Aristotelian theory.

2. POLITICAL PROJECT OF THE GOODS OF EXCELLENCE

MacIntyre builds his theory of Revolutionary Aristotelianism by interpreting Aristotle, Aquinas and Marx. In this chapter I look at political aspects of MacIntyre's reading of Aristotle's theory of the human good and the *polis.* MacIntyre in his post-*After Virtue* writings turned to Thomistic version of Aristotelianism. In the last section of this chapter I look at the political aspects of MacIntyre's reading of Aquinas, especially his theory of natural law. Aristotle's work receives the most attention because, as it will be argued, Aristotle's work serves as the central reference point in MacIntyre's conception of political community and political rationality. In the next chapter I discuss MacIntyre's arguments about the importance of Marx's critique of capitalism for neo-Aristotelian theory, as well as provide a reading of one line of Marxist thought that intersects with MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism. All three authors (Aristotle, Aquinas and Marx) are seen as contributing to the line of political thought referred to as the politics of the goods of excellence.

2.1. Aristotle's ethico-political project

Aristotle's *The Nichomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*) and *Politics* comprise a single theoretic enquiry. Aristotle's discussions of the human good and of moral and intellectual virtues in *NE* are continued in *Politics* with a discussion of the nature of the *polis*, different constitutions, and the best *polis*. Studying *Politics* is essential to understand Aristotle's arguments about the human good, just as a close review of *Ethics* is important to understand the meaning of Aristotle's political discussions. That *NE* and *Politics* enquire into the same subject matter was clearly indicated by Aristotle himself. At the beginning of *NE* Aristotle states that the question of the human good "would seem to be the concern of the most authoritative science"[2], which is politics: "this is obviously the science of politics" (*NE* I.2.1094a28-29). For Aristotle, political considerations must be guided by the knowledge of what is good for human beings; thus the ethical enquiry prepares us for the political practice. Human affairs must be regulated in light of the human good in order to sustain a political society that creates the best conditions for human well-being. Thus at the very end of *NE* Aristotle prompts to enquire into various forms of political constitution and the question of the best *polis* "so that our philosophy

[2] Throughout this chapter, I use Roger Crisp's translation of *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle. 2004. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) and B. Jowett translation of *Politics* (in Jonathan Barnes (ed.). 1995. *The Complete Works of Aristotle: A Revised Oxford Translation, Vol. 2.* Princeton: Princeton University Press). In the text I will refer to the Bekker numbers only.

of humanity might be as complete as possible" (*NE* X.9.1181b15). As MacIntyre remarked, it is a feature of our compartmentalised societies and curricular divisions in contemporary universities to read these two texts separately as if they belong to two different sciences. Such division distorts our understanding of the texts in question (MacIntyre 1988: 102). I will first present a short sketch of Aristotle's ethico-political project and then turn to MacIntyre's interpretation of it.

The account of the human good in *NE* begins with an observation of the plurality of goods aimed at in human affairs: "Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims" (*NE* I.1.1094a1-3). Even though we observe the plurality of goods, Aristotle points to the need to order them: when we enquiry more carefully, we see that some goods are subordinate to others, i.e. we aim for them in order to achieve some other end (for example we may aim to earn money in order to acquire higher education, or vice versa), and that there are some ends that are desired for their own sake and not for some further purpose. Thus the hierarchy of ends begins to emerge: those ends that are pursued for something else, for example, money, are secondary to those ends that are desired for their own sake. As Richard Kraut puts it, Aristotle starts with the common sense observation of the plurality of goods and then asks us to reflect on the ends we pursue in order to move beyond a mere list of goods (Kraut 2002: 51).

But very soon Aristotle draws a conclusion that there must be one final end, towards which all other ends are subordinated – Aristotle calls it "the chief good" (*NE* I.1.1094a23). This conclusion seems rather hasty: from the observation that some ends are subordinate to others, it does not immediately follow that there must be one all-encompassing end. This said, we will return to this issue after we have spelled out the content of Aristotle's notion of the best life. Thus, for Aristotle there exists one single end, the chief good of human life. As Aristotle clarified in *Physics*, ends should be understood in terms of what is best: "end should not be the last thing, but the best" (Aristotle 1995b: II.2.194b32-33). Book I of *NE* attempts to give a general outline of this good that the further books will develop it in greater detail.

Aristotle observes that the answer to what is the highest good of human life seems to be widely shared among people: "Most people, I should think, agree about what it is called, since both the masses and sophisticated people call it happiness, understanding being happy as equivalent to living well and acting well" (*NE* I.4.1095a18-20). The Greek term translated as happiness is *eudaimonia.* But sometimes it is preferable to translate the term as well-being or flourishing. The main reason for this is that the dominant contemporary approaches to happiness understand it as a subjective state – happiness is an individual satisfaction of one's subjective

desires and/or needs. But for Aristotle good life is a much more objective category. Just after Aristotle acknowledges that *eudaimonia* is the highest good he observes that people disagree what *eudaimonia* actually consists of. In *NE* book I chapter 5 Aristotle observes the common opinions that *eudaimonia* could be identified with pleasure, or honour, or wealth, or virtue, or philosophical contemplation. Aristotle proposes to solve the problem of the content of *eudaimonia* by referring to human nature. There must be, according to Aristotle, a form of life (or function, *ergon*) that is specifically human; only this form of life would be the highest *human* good. Aristotle invokes his discussion in *De Anima* of the difference between humans and other animals to argue that the powers of rationality (or the rational part of the soul) distinguish humanity: "the characteristic activity of a human being is an activity of the soul in accordance with reason or at least not entirely lacking it" (*NE* I.7.1098a6-7). By cultivating our powers of rationality we can lead a flourishing life. But, Aristotle adds, in order to cultivate rational powers in the correct way our lives must be informed by adequate virtues (*NE* I.1.7.1098a15).

At this point a note on Aristotle's method is needed. Aristotle starts by observing the common opinions of what human happiness is (pleasure, wealth, honour, virtue, etc.). He then shows their shortcomings and develops his own theory. After this Aristotle returns to the common considerations on the subject to show how his theory is superior and how it does not simply deny the accepted opinions but improves them ("For all the data harmonize with the truth" (*NE* I.8.1098b10). So by proposing his theory of what *eudaimonia* is Aristotle is not denying the role of pleasure or wealth, but specifying their place in the good life correctly understood. So virtue, honour, wealth and pleasure find their proper place in the good life once we understand what *eudaimonia* really is. What is important is to order these various goods in respect to an overall conception of the good. So when Aristotle claims that there is one final end of human life, he is not denying the plurality of ends that he observed in the very beginning of *NE*. Aristotle's account accepts all various human ends and shows that the good life consists in finding the correct place for each of them, so that the unity of all would allow an individual to lead the most fulfilling life. Kraut's interpretation of Aristotle supports this conclusion: a life of virtues is "rich in the variety of goods it contains" (Kraut 2002: 75).

Aristotle divides virtues into intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtues deal with correct reasoning; moral virtues are desirable character traits. According to Aristotle, both intellectual and moral virtues are necessary to lead a flourishing life. To be a practically wise person, i.e. to be able to judge correctly what action is necessary in a particular situation, one must also be a good person: "one cannot be practically wise without being good" (*NE* VI.12.1144a37). A

practically wise person will be able to find a correct action not only relating to the particular circumstances but also in light of the human good:

> It seems to be characteristic of the practically wise person to be able to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself, not in particular respects, such as what conduces to health or strength, but about what conduces to living well as a whole. (*NE* VI.5.1140a25-28)

Every action starts from a desire and is then followed by the rational deliberation on how to achieve the desired goal. The outcome of such deliberation is action: "The first principle of action – its moving cause, not its goal – is rational choice; and that of rational choice is desire, and goal-directed reason" (*NE* VI.2.1139a31-32). To make the rational choice correct one must possess practical wisdom. But in order to have a correct desire one must also possess adequate moral virtues: "for virtue makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things towards it" (*NE* VI.12.1144a7). A good person – the one who has acquired moral virtues – has also transformed her or his desires to aim at good things. Practical wisdom is thus our ability to judge what sort of action would best to bring a desired end.

Aristotle's ethics of the human good is concerned with the fulfilment of human potentiality. The good life requires that we develop the excellences (virtues) of our intellect and character in order to be rational agents able to choose and pursue actions and activities that lead to a fulfilling life. Aristotle insists that only active life, the life in which we use our intellectual and moral powers, not merely possess them, is a good life.

Virtues, or excellences, do not arise spontaneously. Human beings have a potentiality for excellences which is actualised through education and practice: "virtues arise in us neither by nature nor contrary to nature, but nature gives us the capacity to acquire them, and completion comes through habituation" (*NE* II.1.1103a24-25); "we become just by doing just actions, temperate by temperate actions, and courageous by courageous actions" (*NE* II.1.1103b1-2). From Aristotle's claim that the capacity to acquire virtues is given by nature we could conclude that the potentiality for virtuous life is universal. Unfortunately Aristotle seriously damages his account of the human good by claiming that some people are slaves by nature (*Politics* 1.5.1254b16-23), that men are superior to women (*P* I.5.1254b13-14) or that workers are inherently selfish and cannot reason in terms of the human good (*P* VII.9.1329a). MacIntyre's own historicised Aristotelianism, it will be argued throughout the dissertation, combines virtue theory and radical democratic sensitivity in order to preserve virtue theory while correcting Aristotle's own moral blindness.

There is a tension in Aristotle's account of human flourishing between two forms of life. Aristotle starts *Nicomachean Ethics* with an observation that politics is the master art of the human good but at the very end of the book he claims that only a life of philosophical contemplation is the highest form of human activity. So the question remains which form of life is the best: philosophical or political? Kraut proposes to resolve the issue in the following way. For Aristotle, philosophical contemplation is indeed the highest human achievement but only very few have the intellectual capacity to dedicate their life to the pursuit of philosophical truth. For everyone else the best form of life is political: "one in which their social, emotional, and intellectual skills are challenged by the most difficult and therefore the most rewarding of practical tasks: the improvement of civic life" (Kraut 2002: 94). Aristotle addresses his ethico-political works to the future rules of the Greek city-states and provides them with the knowledge of the nature of the human good, various forms of political constitutions and the best practically conceivable form of the *polis.*

As argued, for Aristotle human flourishing means leading an active life informed by moral and intellectual virtues. Aristotle thus extends this account of human well-being into political enquiry: an account of a type of human association that would allow best to lead such a life. The realisation of *eudaimonia* can only be possible in a political community – *polis*. Aristotle argues that a human being (*ho anthrōpos*) "is by nature a political animal" (*P* I.2.1253a1). Only in a certain type of political organisation can humans being develop their potentiality and lead a good life.

In *Politics* Aristotle describes the development of the forms of human association in the order of complexity from the family household, to the village as the collection of households, and finally to the creation of the *polis*. The establishment of the *polis* marks an important achievement. The first types of human association (family and village) arise from bare material needs, while the *polis* creates the possibility for a higher from of social existence: "state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life" (*P* I.2.1252b29-30). It is not the self-interest to preserve life that drives people to sustain a political community, but the possibility of a shared good life: it is the place where moral and intellectual virtues could be developed and the variety of human achievements enjoyed. Aristotle adds that the *polis* is natural and it is prior to the family and the individual (*P* I.2.1253a19). The claim that the *polis* is natural is based, as Kraut argues, on Aristotle's notion that human beings posses a natural desire to associate with one another (Kraut 2002: 244-245). Through social cooperation human beings – political animals – satisfy their needs; the satisfaction of the most basic needs allows the emergence of the new ones and also leads to more complex forms of human social relations. The *polis* stands as the end, *telos,* of this

process: the highest human need, *eudaimonia*, a rationally directed virtuous life, becomes finally possible under the confines of *polis*. The more individual is stuck in the struggle of existence, the less opportunity he has to develop his own human potentiality. That is the essential difference of the *polis* from other types of association: the increased complexity of social organisation allows the formation of intellectual, cultural, political spheres of human existence that further develop human powers and capabilities.

Aristotle defines the *polis* as a community (*koinōnia*) to be distinguished from a mere aggregate (*plēthos*) of persons (*P* VI.8.1328b16). It is not the size or shared interest in trade or security that defines *polis*:

> if men dwelt at a distance from one another, but not so far off as to have no intercourse, and there were laws among them that they should not wrong each other in their exchanges, neither would this be a state. Let us suppose that one man is a carpenter, another a farmer, another a shoemaker, and so on, and their number is ten thousand: nevertheless, if they have nothing in common but exchange, alliance and the like, that would not constitute a state (*P* III.9.1280b17-23)

Aristotle understands *polis* as the shared project of the good life. Aristotle's development of the theory of the *polis* in *Politics* encompasses two broad tasks: the comparative analysis of actually existing constitutions and the normative account of the best *polis.* The first enquiry was implemented as a major project of the Lyceum. Aristotle sent his students to gather information about various political constitutions of Greek city-states. Although the collected material did not survive to this day and it is difficult to assess how many constitutions were actually collected (Diogenes Laertius states that Aristotle collected 158 constitutions), an important text on the history of Athens, *Athenian Constitution*, was discovered in XIX century and it is now generally agreed that it was composed by Aristotle himself. The text most probably was intended to serve as an example for the students in Lyceum and to guide them in their own researches on different city-states. What makes this text so important is that it marks the break with previous tradition of atidographers that based the history of Athens on oral tradition and founds the political science based on empirical research of actual documents (it is a matter of scholarly debates to what actual documents Aristotle had access). The importance of this empirical research cannot be overemphasised. It was the first attempt in ancient Greece to research actual archives, collect laws of various city-states and reconstruct their political histories.[3]

[3] The above description of Aristotle's empirical research into Greek *poleis* follows the arguments of G.E.M. de Ste. Croix (2004) in "The *Athenaioi Politeia* and Early Athenian History*"* in *Athenian Democratic Origins and Other Essays*.

Thus the first step is the empirical analysis of existing societies. The result of this extensive research was a comparative analysis of different constitutions, providing a list of different political regimes. The question of what makes different political constitutions stable and how they deteriorate guides Aristotle's study of various political forms. The distinction between correct constitutions (kingly rule, aristocracy and constitutional government, *politeia*) and their deviations (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy) is grounded in the criteria that the true forms of government serve the common interest while the deviant forms serve only an interest of a particular social group. Thus Aristotle is taking for granted the social divisions (social classes) and the question of good government then turns to the question of the balance of power of the different classes. Aristotle analysis of what makes different constitutions stable and how they deteriorate is based on the analysis of power. Stable regime, even though imperfect from the perspective of the best life, is already an important achievement. Stability is essential for people to lead their own lives in a satisfactory manner and thus a good politician will be concerned of how to balance the power of various groups.

Aristotle justifies his normative enquiry into the best form of government (Books VII and VIII) as arising not from some desire for "sophistical display" but from faults of actual constitutions: "we only undertake this enquiry because all constitutions which now exist are faulty" (*P* II.1.1260b35). Normative speculation is made a necessity by actual political reality. Aristotle did not go into much detail as to why he felt existing constitutions were faulty, but in the last book of *Politics* he observes that the laws of currently existing *poleis* are not directed towards the cultivation of human excellence, but towards the maintenance of power and the interests of war (*P* VII.2.1324b). This comment reveals why Aristotle was dissatisfied with what he found in his comparative research. The development of human potential in the actual *poleis* was restricted and subordinated to the interests of domination, thus to the pursuit of external goods. None of the constitutions analysed by Aristotle were systematically directed to the cultivation of human *eudaimonia.*

Aristotle turns to provide a normative account of what political institutions are necessary for human well-being. But the best *polis* that Aristotle describes is conceived as actually possible under the conditions of his time: "we must presuppose many purely imaginary conditions, but nothing impossible" (*P* VII.4.1325b37-38). Aristotle starts with the questions of the geographic location, size and infrastructure of the best *polis*, but the most important aspect for the present discussion is his description of its political life.

In the ideal *polis,* all citizens will take part in political decisions: "in our state all the citizens share in the government" (*P* VII.13.1332a34). Aristotle envisions a system of rotation in which every citizen should take turns holding political offices, each will rule and will be ruled

in turn (*P* VII.14.1332b26). Through such a process, claims Aristotle, individuals would develop their powers of political rationality and acquire the necessary virtues for being good rulers. Only this type of government can be called free government – government which serves its citizens (*P* VII.14.1333a5). Participation allows the use and development of the powers of practical wisdom. Through the structures of shared power individuals can engage in common decision making and rationally and collectively direct the life of political community to which they belong.

The contrast with Plato's *Republic* is striking. Plato thought that the rule of the city should be left to philosophers, who, due to their superior knowledge, can direct the life of community in accordance to their philosophical insight of what constitutes the human good. Political community should be strictly governed so that everyone could best perform the function assigned to them. Aristotle opposes Plato's attempt to unify the state: he argues that the more unitary the state is, the more it resembles family, whereas a totally united state is like an individual. But polis is neither a family, nor an individual: "a city is by nature a certain kind of plurality" (*P* II.2.1261a18). Even if the unity that Plato is seeking could be possible, it should be resisted, continues Aristotle, because it would destroy the state (*P* II.2.1261a22). Plurality thus is essential to Aristotle's concept of the *polis*. He argues that government is better when it is exercised through the collective rule of the many. Aristotle compares government of the many to a man who has many feet, hands and senses (*P* III.11.1281b). Even though an individual taken separately may be imperfect, nevertheless each individual has some sense of excellence and practical wisdom and together individuals in a group compose a body superior to a singular excellent person. Collective decision is superior, argues Aristotle, because "a multitude is a better judge of many things than any individual" (*P* III.15. 1286a30). Aristotle's *polis* is thus ruled by amateurs, as Kraut (2002: 228) formulates it, and not by people who have some kind of privileged knowledge. Aristotle's *polis* is not Plato's educational dictatorship, but a community of self-education. Aristotle argues that human well-being requires the exercise of powers of rationality which allow us to enquiry into the nature of the good and act so as to achieve it. Shared political deliberation is part of human practical intelligence through which the collective life of political community can be ordered in such a way that it would be most conducive to the development of human potentiality.

Aristotle's *polis* is focused primarily on education and the development of various human powers and capabilities. It provides an equal education for all (we must always keep in mind that Aristotle's "all" is actually very limited) that is aimed at the development of variety of human intellectual, bodily and aesthetic powers. *Polis* becomes a site of the richness of human experience. Equality of education and shared participation in political life, music, dramatic,

religious and sport festivals, and common meals: all these aspect are described by Aristotle as necessary for the best *polis*. It may appear that Aristotle is thinking that the citizens in his best *polis* will live together in perfect harmony with each other. But he is not overlooking the possibility of conflict. Indeed, his research of actual constitutions was guided by the awareness of the sources of conflict. And his many proposals for the best *polis* are aimed at minimising the possibility of destructive conflict between the citizens. Aristotle is sensitive to the economic inequalities: his schemes for the distribution of land and common meals, while not aiming at the equality of property, nevertheless reveal the interest in maintaining economic inequality at low levels. Equal education and shared participation in the rule of the city is also provides a way to contain and resolve conflicts. Kraut emphasises the importance of shared political activity: "The best city that is practicable is one in which all citizens spend only part of their time in leisurely pursuits, and for the rest, join together as equals to work out, as best as they can, the solutions to their common problems" (Kraut 2002: 234).

Polis in Aristotle's political theory is the site of justice: "justice is the bond of men in states" (*P* I.2.1253a38). Justice in the best state is oriented to acknowledge the merits of each individual and to create the possibility for every citizen to achieve what is best for him: "The only stable principle of government is equality according to merit, and for every man to enjoy his own" (*P* V.7.1307a26-27). The Aristotelian *polis* as the shared project of human flourishing aims at sustaining a sense of community between its citizens. Justice that acknowledges everyone's needs and merits is supplemented by a virtue of political friendship. Aristotle dedicates a considerable part of *NE* to describe to describe various forms of friendship, one of its forms being political friendship:

> Friendship seems also to hold cities together, and lawgivers to care more about it than about justice; for concord seems to be something like friendship, and this is what they aim at most of all, while taking special pains to eliminate civil conflict as something hostile (*NE* VIII.1.1155a23-28)

Here again Aristotle acknowledges the need to minimise conflict in the best *polis*. Thus his institutional schemes for the elimination of conflict are supplemented with the account of the special political virtue that creates a sense of comradeship between the citizens. As Eleni Leontsini notes, "Aristotelian political friendship […] require us to have concern for our fellow citizens; 'concern for others' as opposed to 'respect for others' that liberalism advocates" (Leontsini 2007: 199).

Aristotle's best *polis* is distinguished from actually existing *poleis* because it is organised systematically to aim at the goods of excellence. While imperfect cities subordinated goods of excellence for the interests of power and domination, Aristotle called for a *polis* that would subordinate the external goods (power, money, status) for the full development of human potentiality.

2.2. MacIntyre's interpretation of Aristotle's political thought

MacIntyre's interpretation of Aristotle's political theory is central to his conception of Revolutionary Aristotelianism. In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre presents a reading of the emergence of the *polis* as a rational order that systematically aims at human flourishing. MacIntyre's argument is guided by the distinction of excellence and effectiveness that is central to the theory of practices and virtues.

MacIntyre argues that the history of post-Homeric Athens is marked by the growing awareness of this distinction between the goods of effectiveness and the goods of excellence. In the Homeric society, as interpreted by MacIntyre, human interaction is structured by clearly defined social roles. Thus to be *agathos* (good) is to do what one's social role requires one to do. There is no need for practical deliberation about what one should do in a particular situation: the conclusion about action is not reached by deliberation, but is inferred from the socially established role one enacts. It is the society of warrior-kings and *aretē* (excellence, virtue) defines what is to be a good warrior-king (MacIntyre 1988: 15-16). In a society of warrior-kings, achievement of excellence (*aretē*) and winning in combat is closely connected: "To achieve is to excel, but to achieve is also to win" (ibid., 27). There is no clear distinction between power or status and excellence. But, argues MacIntyre, the awareness of the possibility of such conflict between excellence and effectiveness is already inscribed in the Homeric imagination: is it possible to be excellent but lose a fight? Can someone be victorious but also fail to be virtuous (excellent)? MacIntyre is arguing that post-Homeric development of Greek society exhibits a growing awareness that the pursuit of the goods of effectiveness (power, domination, honour) and the pursuit of the goods of excellence are different and occasionally conflicting courses of action. Social transformations in Greek society made the conflict between excellence and effectiveness apparent:

> But when social change transforms institutions, so that the systematic pursuit of excellence in some area or areas becomes incompatible with the pursuit of the goods of riches, power, status,

and prestige, the difference between the two types of pursuit and between the goods which are their objects become all too clear. (MacIntyre 1988: 32)

MacIntyre proposes to understand Athenian history and its central conflicts as driven by the conflict between goods of excellence and the goods of effectiveness and also by the fundamental question of what type of goods the *polis* should be aiming at (ibid., 42). This conflict marked two fundamental conceptions of human society. The first is a society where human association is guided by a shared vision of the good life and where the goods of effectiveness are subordinated to the cultivation of excellence or well-being, and where individuals achieve their own goods through the common goods of the *polis*. If a shared understanding of the good life is not possible then human interaction is inescapably marked by the contest for power, money, status, i.e. external goods, and the best society would be the one that could balance different claims to power and provide some stability allowing individuals and their groups to secure resources necessary to pursue their individual goals and desires. The first vision depicts a society of cooperation where individuals aim together at excellence, a society of relatively insignificant conflict: a *polis* as a shared (political) project of a good life. The second vision is of a society of competition to secure external goods so that those who possess them could lead the form of life they desire. One path is the pragmatist and realist (and to a significant extent pessimist and ultimately, one can argue, proto-liberal) vision, while the other is inspired by an optimistic or even utopian vision of human solidarity and human potentiality. Thus two fundamentally different visions of human beings emerge already, as MacIntyre argues, in post-Homeric reflections on social reality. According to one, human beings aim at excellence; according to the other, human beings aim at "a particular kind of power" (MacIntyre 1988: 88).

MacIntyre reads Plato and Aristotle as aiming to reflect theoretically and systematically on the political aspects of human excellence. Their project (MacIntyre reads Aristotle as Plato's heir, as continuing the work of Plato) was the reaction to claims (advanced mainly by sophists and Thucydides) that there is no objective or universally shared ethical standard of the human good to guide social interactions and that actual social reality is to be understood only as the place of contest for power. The main antagonist of Plato, argues MacIntyre, was Thucydides. Thucydides' view of social reality is based on a single presupposition: "the goods of effectiveness are bound to prevail over those of excellence and the goods of excellence will be prized only insofar as those who prize the goods of effectiveness permit them to be" (MacIntyre 1988: 69). In other words, there is only the justice of the strong and the rules of justice are always defined by those in power. Social interaction is guided by attempts to manipulate the views of others in order to secure the most profitable course of action. Thus Thucydides is

mostly concerned with rhetoric as an art to secure the approval of others to achieve a desired end. It is against this view that Plato and Aristotle developed their philosophical projects. Plato's and Aristotle's theories of the ideal state elaborated the possibility of building a society that would aim systematically at the cultivation of human excellence.

Homeric tradition defined *aretē* in terms of standards internal to some activity: in this case, the life of a warrior-king. MacIntyre argues that post-Homeric Greek society elaborated upon and applied the notion of excellence to various practices. This process has lead to an extended enquiry into the nature of various goods of different practices and the different standards of excellence according to different practices. This process radicalised the problem of justice: if aiming for external goods differs from aiming for internal goods, and if each practice has its own internal standards of excellence, then based on what standards should the rewards for achievements be distributed? Justice in terms of practice and excellence, argues MacIntyre, must be based on the notions of merit and desert (ibid., 33). But as each different practice has its own internal and different standards to judge the achievements, then the political community faces the problem of how to recognise and reward various achievements. According to MacIntyre, this is possible only in the light of some overall shared standard, some notion of human life in the light of which each practice would find its due place and recognition. The *polis* appears as a place where such a notion of the good life could be sustained and politics is introduced as a special art of human flourishing:

> The only form of community which could provide itself with such a standard [of justice] would be one whose members structured their common life in terms of a form of activity whose specific goal was to integrate within itself, so far as possible, all those forms of activity practiced by its members and so to create and sustain as its specific goal that form of life within which to the greatest possible degree the goods of each practice could be enjoyed as well as those goods which are external rewards of excellence. The name given by Greeks to this form of activity was 'politics', and the *polis* was the institution whose concern was, not with this or that particular good, but with human good as such, and not with desert or achievement in respect of particular practices, but with desert and achievement as such. (MacIntyre 1988: 33-34)

The paradox with Plato, argues MacIntyre, is that his solution remained so utopian that it only confirmed Thucydides' view about social reality and even radicalized it: justice conceived by Plato required so radical a change in political reality that it only confirmed its impossibility (MacIntyre 1988: 70). Aristotle's *polis,* on the contrary, remained much more realistic and possible, as it combined elements that were already realised in different *poleis*. Aristotle's account was also based on the intuition that we do not need a special theoretical/philosophical

language to enquire into our own true good: every individual intuitively grasps many important aspects of the good; it remains to develop the reasoning of plain persons more systematically that would move towards a better understanding of the good. Given the right social relations, people would be able to understand what their true good is and act to achieve it. Aristotle's account of the *polis* is based on the collective art of politics that aims at sustaining the well-being of each and of the community as a whole.

Carey Seal (2008) provides a very illuminating interpretation of MacIntyre's account of the nature of the *polis* that refutes many conservative misreadings of MacIntyre's philosophy. According to Seal:

> The classical tradition he [MacIntyre] invokes incorporates a diverse array of moral views, often radically at odds with one another, and that tradition flourishes in the polis precisely because the invention of politics offers the possibility of reconciling moral diversity and moral order. (Seal 2008: 15).

As Seal argues, the life of the *polis* is profoundly paradoxical. The *Polis*, on the one hand, is a site where fundamental disagreements may easily arise: the *polis* incorporates popular assemblies, law courts, theatre stage, all of them being places of disagreement where dissenting views could be expressed. On the other hand, the *polis* is a collective project of the human good. This creates a tension between moral pluralism and moral unity. The art of politics mediates between the two extremes containing the conflict inside the confines of the *polis*. Thus, concludes Seal,

> The centrality of politics to Athenian experience permits the safe flourishing of an entire range of excellences under the organizational penumbra of the city's shared political life. The classical moral tradition MacIntyre seeks to define turns out to be, in the most radical sense, a political tradition, one whose characteristic contradictions can be accommodated only within the sheltering confines of the polis. (ibid)

It is important to emphasise this conclusion: the central element in MacIntyre's account of Aristotelian ethics is that the art of politics is a practice through which disagreement could be resolved and acknowledged as a part of otherwise shared rational enquiry into the nature of the human good. It is a highly rationalistic account with radical democratic implications. The good defined by MacIntyre is essentially political. MacIntyre interprets the rise of the *polis* and political reflection as an outcome of the destruction of some previous socially established way of life and the subsequent emergence of moral pluralism. The *polis* and the art of politics was a

solution to the problem of radical moral disagreement. Any conception of the good life can only be reached through shared political deliberation, sustained by adequate virtues and aiming to rank order the various goods in light of some shared vision of the good life. The human good is inseparable from participatory political community. The practice of politics is developed after the disintegration of traditional ways of life, when the political society must find a way to deal with the irreversible appearance of radical disagreement. As MacIntyre argues in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, with the appearance of *polis* as the society of collective enquiry a return to some previous "unreflective" ways of life is impossible and self-defeating: "when the conservative offers his contemporaries good reasons for returning to an earlier relatively unreflective mode of social life, his very modes of advocacy provide evidence that what he recommends is no longer possible" (MacIntyre 1988: 54).

But Aristotle developed his theory of the *polis* and human flourishing at the time when the *polis* was already disappearing from the Greek political landscape. Aristotle lived through the time of the Macedonian conquest of the Greek city-states and its unprecedented imperial expansion beyond the Greek world. Nevertheless, the political realities of growing Macedonian power seems to be absent from Aristotle's discussions in *Politics.* Some of Aristotle's commentators claim that nothing can be learned about the actual political situation in the Greek world from *Politics*. Thus A. H. Taylor in his interpretation of Aristotle argues that: "For all that Aristotle tells us, Alexander might have never existed, and the small city-state might have been the last word of Hellenic political development" (Taylor 1955: 9). The same interpretation of *Politics* is repeated by Kraut, who contends that the arguments in *Politics* are not informed by actual political realities of the time, at least not by the conflict between Athens and Macedonian power (Kraut 2002: 7-8).

But this view was recently challenged by Mary G. Dietz. In Book III of *Politics* Aristotle discusses the various forms of kingship, of which he finds four types, and then suddenly at the very end of the passage he introduces a fifth type, which he names *pambasileia,* absolute kingship. Dietz argues that "this absolute kingship bears more than passing resemblance to the mode of sovereignty coalescing around Alexander" (Dietz 2012: 281). Aristotle argues that *pambasileia* appears as a form of *oikonomia*: the rule of absolute king resembles paternal authority in a household, where "one man has the disposal of all"; such form of kingship corresponds to the "household management of a city, or of a nation, or of many nations" (*P* III.14. 1285b30).

Aristotle argues that something resembling *pambasileia* existed in ancient times, but then he leaves this example to point out that *pambasileia* is in the end a new and unprecedented form of rule: an absolute government of an all-powerful king whose rule extends to all matters

of its subjects. If Dietz's interpretation according to which Aristotle is indirectly pointing to the rule of his student, then Aristotle's account of the Greek *polis* as a self-governing community aimed at human flourishing could be read as registering what is being lost with the subjugation of independent *poleis* to the big, alien, bureaucratic apparatus of empire. Dietz argues that various hints in *Politics* demonstrate an awareness of this process when the freedom of Greeks is being endangered by the absolute rule of the king and the imperial administration (Dietz 2012: 285).

2.2. Aristotle and Aquinas

Even though Aristotle argues that the best political society will ensure the well-being of all people ("it is evident that the best *politeia* is that arrangement according to which anyone whatsoever might do best and live a flourishing life", *P* VII.2.1324a23-25), he radically limits who counts as citizens by excluding not only slaves and women, but also those who are engaged in some kind of labour (farmers, artisans, tradesmen, other labourers), claiming that they are not able to develop necessary virtues and thus lead a flourishing life:

> the citizens must not lead the life of artisans or tradesman, for such a life is ignoble and inimical to excellence. Neither must they be farmers, since leisure is necessary both for the development of excellence and the performance of political duties. (*P* VII.9.1329a1)

Some of these seemingly arbitrary exclusions from public life – such as women and (natural) slaves – can be easily rejected if one rejects Aristotelian metaphysics; and MacIntyre rejects them in this fashion. But the case of excluding workers is a much more serious case. MacIntyre argues that this prejudice against labour was "one of Aristotle's greatest defects" and his own theory of practices and virtues was intended to correct this defect: "it is in and through our engagement in such laborious and productive activities as farming, construction work and the like that a number of virtues much needed in our individual and communal lives are developed and exercised" (MacIntyre 2008i: 275).

Other limitations of Aristotle's thought have to be acknowledged. MacIntyre starts his *Dependent Rational Animals* with the indictment that Western philosophy has failed to give due account to human vulnerabilities, afflictions and the extent of human dependence on others. Without giving these considerations their due weight any account of human condition fails to be credible (MacIntyre 1999: 1). Almost all Western moral thought fails from this perspective. Even if it acknowledges "some of the facts of human limitation and of our subsequent need of

cooperation with others" those facts are soon put aside (ibid.). Characteristically Western moral philosophy speaks from the perspective of an independent human being (and here feminist and postcolonial theorists would rightfully add that this independent human being was male and also white).

Aristotle's thinking is also marked by such limitation. One virtue in Aristotle's list of virtues reveals his aristocratic bias: a virtue he calls *megalopsychia*, or magnanimity, the greatness of soul. For Aristotle it is "a sort of crown of the virtues" (*NE* IV.3.1124a1) and concerns knowing and showing one's greatness: "A person is thought to be great-souled if he thinks himself worthy of great things – and is indeed worthy of them" (*NE* IV.3.1123b2). It is a person who actively expresses such self-awareness of one's worth: "His movements are thought slow, his voice deep, and his speech measured" (*NE* IV.3.1125a13). MacIntyre in his *The Short History of Ethics* ironically noted that this great-souled man is "very nearly an English gentleman" (MacIntyre 2002: 76). Thus Aristotle's thought is also marked by the same prejudice to speak from the standpoint of those who think themselves to be "self-sufficiently superior" (MacIntyre's other example of such a philosopher is Smith; MacIntyre 1999: 7). MacIntyre's own account of "metaphysical biology" in *Dependent Rational Animals* is an attempt to correct Aristotle's virtue ethics by acknowledging various forms of human vulnerability and dependence.

Aristotle's account of the human good and the best *polis* is limited in another serious way. Aristotle makes a strong connection between justice and the *polis*. In order to realise justice, individuals must develop practical rationality. But perfect practical rationality requires the institutions of the *polis* – outside it, claims Aristotle, one is without justice. Justice ends with the walls of the city-state: "So there is no standard external to the polis by which a polis can be rationally evaluated in respect of justice or any other good" (MacIntyre 1988: 122). Kraut also confirms such interpretation: Aristotle's *polis* is a closed society (Kraut 2002: 212).

After reclaiming Aristotle in *After Virtue,* MacIntyre turned towards a Thomistic interpretation of Aristotelian ethics. One of the reasons for this turn is that it allowed MacIntyre to integrate his neo-Aristotelian social theory and his theistic views. As already mentioned in the introduction, I will leave MacIntyre's theological positions aside. MacIntyre himself continuously argued that political and social views advanced in his works in Thomistic-Aristotelian works are free from any religious presuppositions and as arguments about practical reasoning, justice, and institutional order they are addressed to both religious and atheist readers (MacIntyre 2016: 106). But this turn to Aquinas is also important for our account of the political nature of the good. MacIntyre provided a political interpretation of Aquinas' theory of natural law that allowed him to escape the closed walls of the Aristotelian *polis*. As MacIntyre

interprets it, Aquinas' theory continued the political project of the goods of excellence and the politics of collective self-rule.

Universalist standards of justice that MacIntyre introduces with his turn towards a specifically Thomistic version of Aristotelianism are conceived as the precepts of natural law. Natural law provides some precepts whose function is to sustain the collective pursuit of common goods and the human good. As Mark C. Murphy emphasises, these precepts are, on one hand, substantive: as constraints that prohibit some form of action, as rules that protect individuals from injustice and harm. While on the other hand they are procedural: precepts that must be observed in order to engage in collective projects and shared deliberations; and as such they are enabling (Murphy 2003: 167).

In MacIntyre's interpretation, natural law is knowable to common people in their every-day activities; to understand natural law does not require any special knowledge. It sustains a variety of practices and collective enterprises to achieve the common good; failure to observe those requirements will lead to a disintegration of social cooperation and collective well-being. An important aspect of MacIntyre's account of natural law is that it sustains collective questioning of existing social relations and institutions: "The precepts of natural law are those precepts of reason conformity to which is necessary if we and others are to be able to deliberate together as rational agents and to achieve our common goods as family members, as members of political societies, and the like" (MacIntyre 2016: 89).

Aquinas depicts rational questioning as the essential element for human well-being. For Aquinas, as it was also for Aristotle, the active use of practical rationality constitutes the essential element of the human good: "The practical life, as Aquinas portrays it, is a life of enquiry by each of us into what our good is, and it is part of our present good so to enquire" (MacIntyre 1988: 193). In *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* MacIntyre defines his own Thomistic version of human well-being by stressing the role of disagreement in such collective enquiry: "rational enquiry into and consequent disagreement about what human flourishing consists in in this or that set of circumstances is itself one of the marks of human flourishing" (MacIntyre 2016: 25-26).

MacIntyre argues how Aquinas's views of justice as based on an acknowledgment of universal human needs and natural law as rationally knowable at the level of practical reasoning of plain persons put him at odds with modern institutions of economic and political power. He justified private property but also argued that human needs place limits on ownership. If someone is in such need that she or he faces death it is legitimate for such person to treat the private property of others as common property and use it to save oneself. Taking someone's private property is not a crime in certain circumstances. This view, as MacIntyre rightly

observes, would be strongly rejected by modern writers. Aquinas also rejects exorbitant prices, usury, deception, and justifies trade only as a means to satisfy the needs of community but not as an end in itself. This shows, according to MacIntyre, that Aquinas held a sort of labour theory of value (MacIntyre 1988: 199). All human interaction in Aquinas' conception has to be guided by the requirements of justice grounded in meeting human needs and the common good:

> The standard commercial and financial practices of capitalism are as incompatible with Aquinas conception of justice as are the standard practices of the kind of adversarial system of legal justice in which lawyers often defend those whom they know to be guilty. (MacIntyre 1988: 200)

MacIntyre in his essay "Natural law as subversive: the case of Aquinas" (2006c) situates Aquinas' debates on the authority of law in the political context of his time and reads Aquinas as defending a political alternative to the emerging modern state bureaucracy. MacIntyre argues this point by interpreting Aquinas' theory of natural law as a critique of the policies of Louis IX. Louis IX, believing himself to be a man of outstanding moral virtue whose authority to govern was derived directly from God, enacts laws aimed to ban all vice on behalf of his subjects. Among other things, *jongleurs*, chess and the production of dice were outlawed (MacIntyre 2006c: 46). Louis IX thus attempted to introduce what could be described as an educational dictatorship: in virtue of having the true knowledge of what was good for human beings he enacted laws to force people to comply with the requirements of the "good life". The common man was thus treated as a passive subject who had to be educated by those who knew better what he or she needed.

The reforms of Louis IX, argues MacIntyre, created the bureaucratic structures that essentially became the precursors of modern state bureaucracy. The very detailed law created by those reforms required a big bureaucratic machine of administrators and lawyers to enforce it. The knowledge of the requirements of law was understood to be the special knowledge of these trained lawyers and administrators. The importance of Aquinas comes from his criticism regarding the authority of the law. The fundamental authority of positive law, according to Aquinas, lies not in the fact that it is promulgated by the ruler (or the state), but in its correspondence to the norms of natural law. Only that law is just and has authority that corresponds to the precepts of natural law. If it does not, everyone has a moral right to resist the unjust law. The essential element in Aquinas' account is that every human being is capable of knowing the requirements of natural law simply because she/he is a human being endowed with the powers of reason. Aquinas theory of natural law is articulated in opposition to the notion of law as a special knowledge of specialists. The authority of law rests with plain persons.

MacIntyre interprets Aquinas' theory as radically contrasting with the view that the law is a special sphere of knowledge: "The contrast with Aquinas's thesis that authority as to what the law is, on fundamentals at least, rests with plain persons and that the most important things that lawyers and administrators know about law, they know as plain persons and not as lawyers and administrators, is striking" (MacIntyre 2006c: 50).

MacIntyre argues that Aquinas' theory provided an alternative to the centralising forces of royal administration at the time. Natural law informs the practices of particular communities and is concerned with the common good of those communities. It is the right of every plain person to question the law of the political authority and resist if this law is destructive to the common good of the community. MacIntyre gives an example of *jongleurs:* from the perspective of state bureaucracy they were the only source of social disturbance and therefore had to be banned. Aquinas, on the contrary, defends their function in the community. Aquinas defended them from the perspective that play had an essential function in human life, but MacIntyre adds that the function of *jongleurs* was also to give voice for the oppressed. Thus Aquinas is defending the notion of the human good and natural law as existing through communal practices and sustaining them. The function of natural law is to educate people and help them to reach understanding about their individual and common goods.

On the other hand, natural law, as precepts of rationality that govern the relations between individuals in order to sustain a flourishing community, could also provide a moral source to resist various local prejudices:

> The rationality of plain persons is to be elicited by and exhibited in their participation in communal practices, practices which require a shared recognition of their common good as a political bond, a type of bond very different from that provided in local societies by ethnic or religious or other prejudice. (ibid., 63)

MacIntyre accepts that his reading of Aquinas as some kind of a popular democrat sits ill with Aquinas' defence of the authority of the Church and ecclesiastic elite. Another vulnerability of Aquinas' thinking, as acknowledged by MacIntyre, is that Aquinas lacked any conception of the political common good that could be shared by people of various beliefs (ibid., 62). MacIntyre argues that Aquinas failed to differentiate between political and theological categories, and in the end embraced the same doctrines of authority that he criticised. But MacIntyre points out that Aquinas' account of natural law could be saved if we acknowledge that these limitations of Aquinas' thinking are justified by him with arguments from Christian

theology and not by reference to natural law (ibid.). MacIntyre himself develops a political notion of common good and natural law that is free from Aquinas limitations.

MacIntyre's point is that Aquinas' theory could be advanced in an anti-authoritarian fashion. There is important democratic potential in the natural law tradition. Natural law, as interpreted by MacIntyre, provides the moral justification both for the resistance to bureaucratic institutions and to the prejudices of the small community. This reading of Aquinas adds an important element to MacIntyre's political philosophy by providing standards of justice that MacIntyre found missing in Aristotle's too intimate connection between the closed community of the *polis* and justice.

MacIntyre in his latest *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* also points to this possibility of radical critique inherent in the Thomistic Aristotelian conception of natural law. Conformity to natural law sustains collective enquiry into the nature of individual and common goods. By being able to question collectively how to achieve common goods, people can also start questioning existing power relations. By collectively reaching an understanding of what is required from them in order to achieve those goods, they can also understand what is required from the rulers. Here lies the subversive potential of natural law: "The considerations of what rationality requires of rulers and ruled become a prologue to radical social critique" (MacIntyre 2016: 89). MacIntyre refers to some examples of such radical critique of injustice as exhibited by Thomists: the Dominicans who had a Thomistic education and argued against those who justified the enslavement of indigenous populations in the Americas by reference to Aristotle's texts or Thomistically educated Jesuits who helped indigenous peoples organise militarised resistances against enslavement (ibid., 99), or those Catholics who participated in the general strikes of workers in East London and cooperated with radical trade union leaders (ibid., 107). The point argued by MacIntyre is that Thomistic thought can be used for radical social critique.

MacIntyre's account of natural law should be connected with his now famous rejection of human rights discourse. In *After Virtue* MacIntyre claimed that a belief in human rights has the same status as the belief in witches and unicorns (MacIntyre 2007: 69). MacIntyre rejected any reasoning in terms of human-being-as-such characteristic to liberalism and his rejection of human rights naturally goes along with that. Human rights are exactly those rights that are claimed to belong to human beings as such (ibid., 68-69). The grounds MacIntyre gives for his radical rejection of the notion of human rights are the same he gave when he rejected any universalist account of morality: "every attempt to give good reasons that there *are* such rights has failed" (ibid., 69). MacIntyre comments that originally human rights were argued to be self-evident truths, later moral philosophers grounded them in our "intuitions". Every argument is unacceptable in his view: "we know that there are no self-evident truths" and "the introduction

of the word 'intuition' by a moral philosopher is always a signal that something went badly wrong with an argument" (ibid.). So, finally, he points out that human rights theorists such as Dworkin actually acknowledge that it is impossible to demonstrate rigorously the existence of human rights. So for MacIntyre human rights are just another ungrounded moral fiction of emotivist modernity (this does not mean that they cannot be invoked effectively in the conflicts of modern societies).

Bill Bowring argues that there are important Marxist undertones in MacIntyre's rejection of universal human rights. Marx, points out Bowring, was critical of such abstract categories and, like MacIntyre, argued that a discourse on human rights in reality functioned to destroy human association (Bowring 2008: 211-212). MacIntyre acknowledged Bowring's points and added that some rights from the human rights list are compatible with Aristotelian and Thomistic views on justice but others are not; and that human rights discourse itself is impotent to differentiate between the two. And, secondly, that his attack on human rights should be understood as an attack on those who would use them to justify right-wing political agendas:

> The conception of rights and the political use of that conception which I was then attacking I took to be characteristic of Thatcherite conservatism, epitomized by Margaret Thatcher's brash assertion that there is no such thing as society. (MacIntyre 2008i: 272)

MacIntyre's Aristotelianism proposes that we think about human relations not in terms of rights, but in terms of goods. The socially embedded notion of goods provides the standard to judge what is conducive to human well-being and what is not. By rejecting human rights, points Browning, MacIntyre is embracing neither a conservative nor a nihilist view. Moreover, his subsequent embrace of natural law should also be understood as an alternative to a discourse on the existence of human rights. Natural law provides some universal rules of justice but it is also grounded in the actual life of political communities. It functions as a set of enabling precepts that allow for a rational collective enquiry into the nature of the individual and common goods. Thus natural law provides a universal standpoint for MacIntyre at the same time allowing him to escape the possible individualistic and antisocial implications he found in the human rights discourse.

The political project of the goods of excellence that MacIntyre developed in his interpretation of Aristotelian political project thus was continued in Aquinas' theory of natural law and community. Modernity had its own theory and the practical project of the goods of excellence, namely Marxism. Marx's critique of capitalism was driven by the understanding how the conflict between goods of effectiveness and the goods of excellence remained unsolved

in the course of human history. Capitalism, from the perspective of Marxist critique, restricts the possibility of human flourishing by subordinating the goods of excellence to the goods of effectiveness (accumulation of capital). Links between MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian thought and Marx's critique is investigated in the next chapter.

3. MARXISM AND ARISTOTELIANISM

3.1 MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism and Marx's *Capital*

It has been argued that the development of MacIntyre's thought can be divided into three periods: Marx without Aristotle, Aristotle without Marx, and Aristotle and Marx together (Burns 2011: 36). The first period is characterised by MacIntyre's early engagement with Marxism and gradual abandonment of Marxist politics. Burns terms it "Marx without Aristotle" because MacIntyre was reading Marx through the Hegelian lenses, as it was the dominant reading of Marx at the time. During the second period the neo-Aristotelian theory in *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* is developed without any direct connection to specifically Marxist critique of capitalism. And MacIntyre's later works appropriate certain features of Marx's thought interpreted from the neo-Aristotelian perspective.

Responding to such a characterisation, MacIntyre has claimed that he has never lost sight of Marxist problematic and that his theory of practices and virtues is compatible with Marx's critique of capitalism. MacIntyre refers to three sets of truths in Marxist critique that Neo-Aristotelian theory must acknowledge:

> The first set of such truths concerns the nature of capitalism as an immensely productive exploitative system, in which the competition of free markets requires the maximization of profit, so that surplus value has to be appropriated by the owners of the capital, and wages and other labour costs have to be minimized. So a class war is waged against those who have only their labour to sell and who provide the productive manual and mental labour which creates value. A second set of truths concerns the nature of work within that same system. Because of the extent to which labour is made into and values as a commodity, work often becomes valued only as a means to production and consumption, and workers are correspondingly valued only for their producing and consuming functions. When workers are not or no longer needed, they are discardable. A third set of truths concerns the movement of capital. Capital flows in whatever directions will secure it the highest rate of return, but this is rarely, if ever, the direction in which it would have to flow if it were to be invested to meet human need. (MacIntyre 2011b: 315)

Thus MacIntyre accepts the theory of exploitation, class struggle, commodification of labour and other important elements of Marxist analysis of the workings of capitalism. But the

question remains of how a specifically Marxist analysis of capitalism could be reconciled with the neo-Aristotelian categories. MacIntyre addresses this question in *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* where the problem of affinities between Marx's critique and the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition receives its most radical formulation.

MacIntyre argues that contemporary neo-Aristotelians need to accept two things from Marx's critique of capitalism: Marx's theory of surplus-value and "his account of how individuals must think of themselves and of their social relationships, if they are to act as capitalism requires them to act" (MacIntyre 2016: 96). MacIntyre aims to integrate his neo-Aristotelian account of practical reasoning and the structuralist account of capitalism; he references to Althusser and his account of capitalism as "a set of structures that function in and through modes of dissimulation" (ibid.). Marxism supplements neo-Aristotelianism: neo-Aristotelian account of practical agency describes how individuals can arrive at genuine understanding of themselves and their social environment while the Marxist theory of capitalism provides an account of the structures that effectively preclude such understanding. Marx's insights, in other words, provide the best account of why individuals in contemporary societies do not understand themselves as Aristotelian practical agents. As Althusser notes, ideology is material: it is rooted in the specific institutional structure of capitalist societies. Thus MacIntyre: "Capitalism is not only a set of economic relationships. It is also a mode of presentation of those relationships that disguises and deceives" (MacIntyre 2016: 95). We have to look closer at both elements of Marxist critique that MacIntyre refers to.

The theory of surplus-value was developed by Marx as the key to the workings of the capitalist mode of production and distribution that reveals its exploitative nature. As MacIntyre notes, the application of the theory of the surplus-value in Marx's analysis rests on certain conditions: the majority of the population must be working as wage-labourers and have no alternative ways to meet their needs; and the means of production must be concentrated in the hands of one social class (ibid., 97). Marx was clear that the concept of surplus-value only applies in class societies where labour itself is turned into commodity. Thus the theory of commodity also explains what happens to labour under capitalism. Commodities, as Marx explains, have a twofold nature: use-value and exchange-value. Use-value refers to specific, individual quality of objects that makes them useful to satisfy a particular need. In their use-value, objects are unique and are not comparable. Meanwhile commodities are exchanged, bought and sold. This quantitative relation between two objects constitutes their exchange-value. As exchange-values, commodities are abstracted from their use-value. Marx's question was what constitutes the value of a commodity expressed as exchange-value. The value of a commodity, according to the labour theory of value, is the socially necessary labour time that is

embodied in that commodity. But for labour to have such a function, it must also be abstracted and quantifiable. Labour itself must be turned into a commodity. Only when labour becomes abstracted, bought and sold, can it become the measure of economic value.

Like any other commodity labour has the same dual character of use-value and exchange-value. What appears as a wage for work done is, in reality, only a compensation that covers the exchange-value of labour. But labour has its use-value, which is its specific power to generate value in the process of production. In fact, only a part (an increasingly smaller part because of technological innovation and growing productivity) of the working day is spent to reproduce value that is equal to the wage. This amount of labour is referred to by Marx as the necessary labour. The rest of the time, workers produce surplus-value that is appropriated by the owners of the means of production. Behind the illusion of free and equal exchange in the labour market there is the actual reality of extraction of unpaid surplus-value. The ratio of surplus labour to necessary labour defines the level of exploitation of workers (Marx 1992a: 326). Thus capitalist production is injust and this injustice is explained by the labour theory of value.

Marx credits Aristotle with discovering the use-value/exchange-value distinction. But for Aristotle, according to Marx, exchange value remained a mystery. He was unable to arrive at the labour theory of value and explain the source of the value of things because of the social relations of the contemporary Greek society:

> Aristotle's genius is displayed precisely by his discovery of a relation of equality in the value-expression of commodities. Only the historical limitation inherent in the society in which he lived prevented him from finding out what 'in reality' this relations of equality consisted of. (Marx 1992a: 152)

In a society based on slave labour, Marx argues, people and their labour cannot be conceived of as equal (that is, there is a qualitative difference between activities of a free man and labour of a slave; it cannot be expressed in quantitative difference). Thus one could not grasp the concept of value before the advent of capitalism and the modern conception of the fundamental equality of all human beings. It was impossible for a pre-modern society to develop a notion of abstract labour.

Scott Meikle (1995) provides the best and most detailed account of Aristotle's struggle with the nature of exchange value. According to Meikle, Aristotle approached the problem from his metaphysical account of substances. Aristotle opened a "metaphysical gulf" between use-value and exchange-value (ibid. 68). In the few passages dealing with this question, Aristotle tested several possible propositions about what constituted economic value, but failed to arrive

at any satisfactory answer. Meikle's conclusion confirms Marx's: since there is no notion of abstract labour in Aristotle, he is unable to develop an account of economic value. For Aristotle, things remain intelligible only in their use-value (ibid., 42).

Thus labour theory of value becomes applicable only when capitalist mode of production becomes dominant. Capitalist commodity production also affects the way individuals perceive themselves and their social relations. As Marx ironically comments, commodity is "a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties" (Marx 1992a: 163). This mystifying nature of commodity production was described by Marx as commodity fetishism. There we reach the second aspect of capitalism mentioned by MacIntyre: the mystifying and deceiving nature of capitalism.

In a somewhat complicated passage on commodity fetishism in *Capital* Volume 1, Marx shows that capitalist mode of production tends to hide its true nature. Marx defines commodity fetishism as a phenomenon by which "the relations between the producers, within which the social characteristics of their labours are manifested, take on the form of a social relation between the products of labour" (Marx 1992a: 164). Marx is pointing to the effect of inversion: value appears as a natural quality of objects, as a relation between things expressed in their market value, and not as an embodiment of abstract labour. The more society produces products as commodities to be exchanged in the market, the more the sphere of circulation of things (commodities) appears as an independent sphere governed by its own laws (economy). Human lives under capitalism becomes governed by the laws of the market: "Their own movement within society has for them the form of a movement made by things, and these things, far from being under their control, in fact control them" (ibid., 167-168).

The phenomenon of commodity fetishism that hides the nature of value production also creates the illusion that it is capital itself that is productive. G. A. Cohen argued this to be the central aspect of Marx's account of capital fetishism: the productivity of workers takes the form of the productivity of capital (Cohen 1984: 118). It is the sphere of capital movement that generates illusions of capital itself producing value. So in one of the most crucial passages of *Capital,* Marx invites us to leave the "noisy sphere" of capital circulation and delve into "the hidden abode of production" (Marx 1992a: 279) if we want to understand how value is produced in capitalism. Behind the appearance of the circulation of things, of equal exchange in the market and of capital as a value-producing factor, there lies the reality of surplus-value extraction and exploitation.

MacIntyre acknowledges that the continuation of capitalist relations depends on producing ideological systems that hide the exploitative nature of capitalist mode of production. That capitalism is the society of unfreedom is disguised by the ideological system of freedom

and individual choice. Capitalism functions successfully, argues MacIntyre, as long as individuals see themselves as free. But this ideology of freedom is in fact itself the product of capitalism whose function is to hide the true nature of capitalist relations: "The relations of exchange through which those who own the means of production appropriate the unpaid labour of productive workers are disguised by their legal form as the contractual relations of free individuals, each of them seeking what she or he takes to be best for her or himself" (MacIntyre 2016: 97).

In *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* MacIntyre provides an important contribution to Marx's analysis of capitalist ideology. He refers to Marx's discussion of pre-capitalist societies in the chapter on commodity fetishism in *Capital* where Marx seems to suggest that, in those societies, the true nature of social relations was not hidden from social agents and people were able to see things as they were. To everyone involved, the relations of personal dependence that prevailed in pre-capitalist societies were transparent as relations of personal dependence (how they were justified is another matter). MacIntyre contributes to Marx's analysis by pointing out that those instructed in Aristotelian and Thomistic vocabulary of goods, ends and natural law were able to ask critical questions about their social roles and relations. MacIntyre argues that Marx failed to see that this possibility of internal critique had to do with the predominance of the Aristotelian mode of thought. But this failure should not be seen as a theoretical weakness on Marx's part. According to MacIntyre, Marx was not able to make this insight because of two objective features of Marx's time and his intellectual milieu: first, his rejection of any theology (and Aristotelians of the Middle Ages were theologians), which is the legacy of Enlightenment and the Hegelian left (Feuerbach); and, second, the rudimentary state of scholarly studies of the Middle Ages at the time of Marx's writing (Macintyre 2016: 96).

MacIntyre seems to be claiming that the modern moral thinking that he criticises is a product of the spread of the capitalist mode of production and exchange. Changes in economic relations bring along a different vocabulary to understand the self and the nature of social relations. MacIntyre therefore sees modern moral philosophy as reflecting on social relations among individuals in emerging capitalist economies. As pre-capitalist forms of society disappear, so does the context for the (Thomisic) Aristotelian mode of self-understanding and "such Aristotelian and Thomistic notions as those of an end, a common good, or the natural law" find no application in the emerging new conceptual framework (MacIntyre 2016: 98). So, MacIntyre observes, in the world of capitalist social relations the central question of ethics becomes "Why should I not pursue the satisfaction of my desires with unbridled egoism, resorting to force or to fraud whenever necessary?" (ibid.). The conflict between egoism and altruism becomes the central problem for modern moral thinking. "[T]he case for morality

becomes the case for altruism", MacIntyre argues, and modern moral philosophers have come up with different arguments "as to what that case is" (MacIntyre 2016: 98).

But the challenge of (Thomistic) Aristotelians to the emerging capitalist mode of production became progressively ineffective because it presupposed a mode of life that was destroyed by the advent of capitalism. For a critique to be effective, it must present not just a different theory, but also envision a possibility for an alternative way of life informed by that theory (ibid., 98-99). Therefore, the further capitalism advanced and the more people embraced self-perceptions that capitalism required of them, the less room remained for rational questioning of the existing social order. The new mode of thought that developed alongside capitalism was unable to discern new and specifically capitalist modes of injustice and exploitation. At the same time, all previous modes of moral thinking, as they lost their social anchoring, also became incapable of such a critique, becoming merely different ungrounded voices in the modern moral cacophony that MacIntyre describes in *After Virtue.*

By describing modern moral philosophy as a direct outcome of the capitalist relations in *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity,* MacIntyre is offering a major reformulation of his own criticism of modern morality. In *After Virtue* he presented modern moral vocabulary as the outcome of the failure of Enlightenment, without making any direct references to capitalism as such. But the reading of *After Virtue* as supplementing Marxist critique of capitalism was pointed to by several critics. In his review of *After Virtue*, Frederic Jameson argues there is a clear connection between the logic of capitalism and MacIntyre's critique of modern moral vocabularies, claiming that "the first section of this book [*After Virtue*] offers the most probing and devastating analysis of the reification of moral categories under capital which we possess" (Jameson 2008: 190). But it remains true that MacIntyre's arguments from the middle period (*After Virtue; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*) are developed without any direct reference to the effects of the capitalist mode of production. Ruth Groff points to what she sees as a "striking lacuna" in MacIntyre's critique of modern moral discourse: "[A] failure to connect the false but real appearance of liberal forms of reason to the specific logic of capitalism as a political economic system" (Groff 2012: 776). Groff notes how abstract anti-essentialist categories of liberal thinking, such as individual-as-such, should be linked directly to the abstraction and commodification of labour. In *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* MacIntyre is clearly taking the path of reasoning pointed to by Groff by acknowledging how "false but real" categories of the modern moral discourse are connected with the advent of the capitalist mode of production.

Groff's critique of MacIntyre from the Marxist perspective also highlights deeper connections between MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism and Marx's work. Groff points to the relevance of Marx's early category of species-being: "[S]pecies-being – a capacity for free,

conscious, collective self-determination – is arguably just the sort of inherently open-ended, neo-Aristotelian category that MacIntyre was casting about for in *After Virtue*, when he replaced the concept of 'soul' with that of 'practice within a healthy tradition'" (ibid, 789). From this perspective, the analysis of capitalism in *Capital* should be read together with more philosophical discussion of human nature and alienation in Marx's early *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844. MacIntyre himself observes in *Marxism and Christianity* that the concept of alienation is present in Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism in *Capital Volume I* and in his analysis of freedom in *Volume III* (MacIntyre 1984: 77). At that time, however, MacIntyre was reading Marx through Hegel, and not through Aristotle.

Although MacIntyre himself does not give any interpretation of species-being and alienation through Aristotelian categories, some recent readings of Marx do analyse them in Aristotelian and even MacIntyrean terms, particularly those of practice, internal goods and virtues. It is important to look at these readings because they point towards a close dialogue between MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism and some versions of contemporary readings of Marx.

But first a short comment on the status of these concepts in the scholarship on Marx is necessary. Marx's *Manuscripts* were unknown to readers in Marx's and Engels' lifetime as well as during the classical period of Marxism of the Second International. The form of Marxism that was dominant during the Second International presented itself as scientific theory that describes laws of the historical development of societies, rendering moral and philosophical speculation unnecessary. Marxism was not just another system of ethical ideals; it was a scientific social theory about the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the transition to more rational mode of production, namely, socialism. The necessity to acknowledge the philosophical presuppositions of Marx's work were argued for by Gyorgy Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923/1971) and Karl Korsch in *Marxism and Philosophy* (1923/2012) and their arguments were later reinforced by the publication of *Manuscripts* in 1927. But the controversy about the validity of concepts like species-being or alienation remained and were even intensified by the Althusserian attempt to purge Marx's thought of any Hegelian and "humanist" residues (Althusser 1996, Althusser & Balibar 2009).

But some strands of Marxist theory focused on affirming the validity and importance of ethical presuppositions in Marx's thinking. Some of the major contributions deserve a mention. Norman Geras' has refuted the "rather old obstinate legend" that Marx himself did not believe in human nature and that Marxism as a system of thought is not compatible with such philosophical views (Geras 1983). Scott Meikle has reconstructed Marx's Aristotelian essentialism of substances (Meikle 1985). István Mészáros (2005) has provided a comprehensive study of Marx's theory of alienation, arguing that this theory informs Marx's

entire theoretical enterprise. Marx's philosophical account of alienation is not something he left behind as he moved to economic analysis of capitalism; Mészáros has conclusively reconstructed the continuity of this theory from early works through *Grundrisse* to *Capital*.

One detail about these philosophical attempts needs to be highlighted: they became influential at the time when the classical Marxist project (both political and theoretical) was increasingly perceived as failed. This background is not coincidental. As Marxism in its classical form became increasingly and manifestly outdated and inadequate, the validity of Marx's theory had to rest on something other than its "scientific" foundation. An attractive way to preserve the relevance of Marxism was found in interpretations that downplayed Marx's scientific and "prophetic" elements and focused on the ethical foundations of his arguments.

3.2. Ethical foundations of Marxism: species-being and alienation

Marx's ethics finds its best articulation in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* a work that so impressed young MacIntyre that he claimed it to be one of "the two most relevant books in modern era", the first being St. Mark's Gospel (MacIntyre 1953: 109). The central question in Marx's early *Manuscripts* is human flourishing and the alienating nature of the capitalist mode of production. Marx's analysis of alienation under capitalism is grounded in a particular conception of human nature, or species-being (*Gattungwesen)*. When Marx is talking about species-being, he is raising a question similar to the one that Aristotle raises when he asks about what constitutes a specifically human *ergon.* Aristotle answers the question by singling out human powers of reason. In the case of Marx, human species-being is understood through the category of "production".

By production Marx does not mean only physical labour. Even though his analysis is focused mostly on how work and worker are alienated under capitalism, he makes it clear that his criticism applies to a broad range human activities: "Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular* modes of production, and fall under its general law" (Marx 1992c: 349). For Marx, productive activity, designated as production, is not an economic category – it is an anthropological concept (Fromm 2004: 32; Meszaros 2005: 115). It is therefore essential to unpack Marx's conception of production in greater detail before turning to an analysis of specific aspects of alienation under capitalism.

Marx is thus asking what type of activity expresses essential human potentiality. For Marx, freedom characterises truly human activities: "The whole character of a species, its species character, resides in the nature of its life-activity, and free conscious activity constitutes the species-character of man" (Marx 1992c: 328). Free and conscious activity means that, as

rational animals, we are able to rationally direct our activities according to our needs and desires. But we are most free, and thus most human, when we pursue our activities without any external motivation. According to Marx, animals "produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so, while man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need" (ibid. 329).

In Marx's thought, freedom is inseparable from sociality. As human beings, we act and enjoy the results of our activity socially: "Activity and consumption, both in their content and in their *mode of existence*, are *social*: *social* activity and *social* consumption" (ibid., 349). Marx specifies that sociality does not mean that every human activity is done in directly communal form, but that it nevertheless involves social cooperation:

> Social activity and social consumption by no means exist *solely* in the form of a *directly* communal activity and a directly *communal* consumption, even though *communal* activity and *communal* consumption, i.e. activity and consumption that express and confirm themselves directly in *real association* with other men, occur wherever that *direct* expression of sociality [*Gesellschaftlichkeit*] springs from the essential nature of the content of the activity and is appropriate to the nature of the consumption. (ibid. 350)

Marx is saying that what makes us human is our capacity for free, conscious, social activity through which we shape our environment and ourselves. Because of such nature humanity is historical, it is constantly changing and developing. Through free and cooperative activities human beings develop their essential powers and capabilities. Marx's scholar István Mészáros points out that sociality is central to Marx's conception of authentically human powers: "The common denominator of all these human powers is sociality" (Mészáros 2005: 158).

The conception of species-being provides a background for Marx's analysis of capitalism. So even though the purpose of Marx's analysis is the critique of economy, this critique is based on a philosophical understanding of human nature, or human flourishing. Marx was dissatisfied with bourgeois economists for their inability to look at human being as a whole. For bourgeois economists, argues Marx, human being exists only as wage worker in market relations. All other elements of human life are left outside their economic analysis. Thus political economy "does not consider him [the worker] during the time when he is not working, as a human being. It leaves this to criminal law, to doctors, to religion, to the statistical tables, to politics and to the beadle" (Marx 1992c: 288).

To put it in MacIntyre's terms, we can say that Marx's analysis is an attempt to overcome the compartmentalised understanding of human being, when different spheres of human existence (economy, family, state, etc.) are taken separately. "It is inherent in the very nature of estrangement that each sphere imposes upon me a different and contrary standard: one standard for morality, one for political economy, and so on" (Marx 1992c.: 362). Each of these spheres looks at human being only from its own point of view and fails to acknowledge human existence in all its aspects. Such limited view is itself a product of alienation.

The category of *Gattungswesen* allows Marx to enrich economic categories such as labour or capital by grounding them in the philosophical understanding of human flourishing. As Eugene Kamenka summarizes: "The fundamental categories of political economy, Marx insists, are not labour, capital, profits, rents, land. The fundamental category is man, man and his human activities" (Kamenka 1972: 71). This reveals the scope and ambition of Marx's theoretical enterprise. It also shows how ungrounded are the popular images of Marx as economic reductionist.

Marx approaches capitalism by examining how it transforms the nature of human activities. As more and more of production (in the broad sense of the word) is done in the form of wage-labour, it is this new and now central form of production that is the main target of Marx's critique. Labour under capitalism is commodified, bought and sold, performed for external reasons, hence emptied of its character of being an expression of our shared humanity. This is what Marx calls alienation, or estrangement: the estranged form of productive activity under capitalism. The next step in Marx's analysis is to spell out the different aspects of this phenomenon.

The first aspect of alienation pointed to by Marx is "the fact that labour is *external* to the worker, i.e. it does not belong to his essential being" (Marx 1992c: 326). Labour, instead of being an expression of freedom and sociality, becomes externalised: an object to be bought and sold. Thus productive activity is divorced from the life-affirmation: "He [the worker] therefore does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself," real life happens only outside work. Labour is thus "not the satisfaction of a need but a mere *means* to satisfy needs outside itself" (ibid).

Workers are alienated not just from their productive activities but also from the products of their labour: "the worker is related to the *product of his labour* as to an *alien* object" (ibid., 324). Products no longer belong to the producer, but to the owner of the means of production. So the producers are separated from the material wealth they produce. Furthermore, the worker becomes absolutely dependent for his survival on selling his labour and so looses the control of his own life: "So much does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the

more objects the worker produces the fewer he can possess and the more he falls under the sway of his product, of capital" (Marx 1992c: 324). Thus workers are estranged both from things (products of their labour) and from themselves (from their own labour). Because the worker has to sell her/his labour, so the life of the worker is reduced to the existence of commodity: "The existence of the worker is therefore reduced to the same condition as the existence of every other commodity" (ibid: 283). From the perspective of economy, worker is just an abstract category of labour: "from being a man [the worker] becomes an abstract activity and a stomach" (ibid., 285). An unfortunate commodity, because it has to feed itself.

Marx develops his category of alienation in reference to physical labour; nevertheless, it applies to human activity in general. We do not need to consider a worker so impoverished he can barely survive, as it was common during the time Marx developed his ideas, to understand the effects of alienation. The question that Marx's notion of alienation raises is this: to what ends is a particular activity directed? Is a particular activity performed as an end in itself, or is it done for some external reason? That part of human life that is spent labouring in order to secure external resources (being a cashier in a supermarket or slaving in the office) is alienated. Of course, it is always possible to object that one can actually find satisfaction is some forms of work even if it is performed as wage-work. That someone's work brings a sense of self-fulfilment at the same time as it secures material resources does not change the fact that even today much of human labour is performed only for external reasons and is alienated in much the same ways that Marx outlines in his analysis.

Finally, alienation manifests itself on a social scale: instead of free cooperation, we have a society that is divided into opposing groups (classes) and a social life organized under rules of competition. Individuals are alienated from their nature as social beings, their nature as humans, and so from each other: "the proposition that man is estranged from his species-being means that each man is estranged from the others and that all are estranged from man's essence" (ibid., 330). The point that Marx is making here is this: we discover each other as fellow human beings through cooperative and free activity; under alienated social relations, we understand ourselves and others as isolated individuals with opposing needs. Capitalism therefore compartmentalises societies into opposing classes with the result that we lose sight of our shared humanity.

For Marx, the possibility of a truly human association is experienced in shared struggles against alienated social existence. He sees humanist relations rediscovered among the impoverished working class. The cause that drives human beings to rediscover shared humanity is the impoverishment generated by capitalism: "Poverty is the passive bond which makes man experience his greatest wealth – the *other* man – as need" (Marx 1992c: 353). The active bond is

created through the shared struggles against oppressive social conditions. Marx sees how humanist morality emerges in workers associations:

> When communist *workmen* gather together, their immediate aim is instruction, propaganda, etc. But at the same time they acquire a new need – the need for society – and what appears as a means has become an end. This practical development can be most strikingly observed in the gatherings of French socialist workers. Smoking, eating and drinking, etc, are no longer means of creating links between people. Company, association, conversation, which in its turn has society as its goal, is enough for them. The brotherhood of man is not a hollow phrase, it is a reality, and the nobility of man shines forth upon us from their work-won figures. (ibid., 365)

Marx reiterates his acknowledgement of humanist ethical standards emerging from workers' struggles in *The Holy Family*: "One must know the studiousness, the craving for knowledge, the moral energy and the unceasing urge for development of the French and English Workers to be able to form an idea of the *human* nobility of this movement" (Marx, Engels 1975: 84). When Marx discovers the agency of the working class, at no point does he consider it as solely the social power destined to become the new ruling class. On the contrary, for Marx the working class is the embodiment of moral agency in the alienated and dehumanized society. Marx believes that through the struggle to emancipate itself the working class will realise the truly humane society.

One final aspect of alienation concerns our relationship with the natural environment. Humanity does not only get alienated from its inner nature, *Gattungswesen*, but also from nature as our environment. Nature, says Marx, is our "inorganic body"; humanity and nature are in "continuous interchange". Human beings are themselves part of nature (Marx 1992c: 328). Alienation manifests itself in our relation to nature when a sharp line is drawn between nature and humanity. Humanity is not seen as only one part of a bigger system that we call nature. Instead, nature becomes an object to be used to satisfy the needs of economic growth without considering the destructive effects on our natural environment. The best illustration of this side of alienation is the contemporary climate crisis and the complete lack of political power to curb the cynicism of corporations in the face of looming climate catastrophe. The abuse of nature now threatens us with the destruction of human civilization.

Marx's analysis shows how, in the capitalist society, the means-ends relationship is reversed. Productive activity, instead of being directed so satisfy human needs and desires, is instead guided by human greed and personal wealth accumulation. Marx's analysis dissects obscene relation of human needs and capitalist production. As producers compete in the market, production is not aimed at satisfying human needs; instead, these needs are subject to

manipulation aimed at selling the product. A truly human relationship, embodied in free and cooperative activity, is subverted into relations of manipulation: "Each attempts to establish over the other an alien power, in the hope of thereby achieving satisfaction of his own selfish needs" (Marx 1992c: 358).

Marx unpacks how this kind of estrangement is manifested by the reduction of the whole world of human individuality to the dictate of profit, that is, money:

> The need for money is [...] the real need created by the modern economic system, and the only need it creates. The *quantity* of money becomes more and more its sole *important* property. Just as it reduces everything to its own form of abstraction, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to something *quantitative*. *Lack of moderation* and *intemperance* come to be its true standard (ibid., 358).

Marx's vision of money relations reveals his classical ethical thinking. The virtues of temperance and moderation are constantly undermined under capitalism. Instead, we have an organized form of *pleonexia,* an economic system that privileges greed and excess. MacIntyre points how *pleonexia* comes to be understood as a virtue, as a socially valued character trait (MacIntyre 2016: 109).

The system of private property and money relations reduces the richness of human life to the dull sense of possession: "Therefore *all* the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple estrangement of *all* these senses – the sense of *having*" (Marx 1992c: 352). The dullness of senses afflicts not only the impoverished worker, but also the possessing classes: "The man who is burdened with worries and needs has no *sense* for the finest of plays; the dealer in minerals sees only the commercial value, and not the beauty and peculiar nature of the minerals" (ibid., 353). Instead of a wealth of human development, we have a system of privately accumulated external wealth. External possessions become the measure of human worth: "It [bourgeoisie] has resolved personal worth into exchange value" (Marx, Engels 1976: 487). Marx's brilliant analysis of money in *Manuscripts* vividly reveals how human qualities become secondary in the face of wealth.

We see from *Manuscripts* that Marx is concerned with different ends of human activity. In this respect, his thinking follows the Aristotelian tradition by insisting that the nature of activity changes if its ends are changed. Marx presents a vision of two forms of activity: one that is free, cooperative and is done for its own sake, activity that is the expression of human powers and capabilities; and activity pursued for external reasons, namely, money. Marx was concerned with the free development of essential human powers that the alienating nature of capitalism

was impeding. Removing this impediment required to transform relations of production into a form that would make individual development as rich as possible. The ideal was best formulated in *The Communist Manifesto*: "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Marx, Engels 1976: 506). Freedom for Marx meant freedom to exercise one's essential human powers.

Marx's analysis in *Manuscripts* is somewhat utopian in that he describes communism as a "fully developed naturalism, equals humanism", as the resolution of the conflicts "between man and nature, and between man and man", "between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species", as "the solution of the riddle of history" (Marx 1992c: 348). One is even temped to argue that Marx is somewhat ironic in these passages, playing with the Hegelian jargon. Marx in his later works developed a much more realist approach to the question of social transformation.

Marx is not using the words "alienation" or "estrangement" in *Capital*. But it would be a mistake to suppose that his philosophical analysis of alienation does not inform his mature work on the workings of capitalism. Near the end of Volume III of *Capital,* Marx returns to the question of human flourishing. Here again, he expounds the ideal of activities that are ends in themselves, activities that are worth of human dignity. The passage requires to be quoted in full:

> In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilised man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite. (Marx 1992b: 959)

Here Marx is offering a much clearer explication of the relationship between human flourishing and economic activity than in *Manuscripts,* where the goal of communism is understood as a "positive transcendence of private property". Marx calls for socialization of

labour, which means democratic control of economic activity by producers and shortening the working day as a necessary prerequisite for the "true realm of freedom". Even today Marx's requirements remain as urgent as ever, especially when we consider the rapidly increasing productivity of today's capitalism coupled with stagnating real wages and growing unemployment (see, for example, Harvey 2007).

The above quoted passage has been somewhat controversial in Marxist literature. G. A. Cohen criticises Marx's supposedly radical divide between necessary labour and human fulfilment:

> The possibility Marx swiftly excludes is that material necessities might be met, at least partly, by 'that development of human energy which is an end in itself'. One cannot settle *a priori* the extent of compatibility between labour and creative fulfilment. Marx thought he knew the compatibility would always be small. Hence his need to forecast diminishing quantities of labour. It is not a predication believers in human liberation are forced to accept. (Cohen 1984: 325)

Cohen is, of course, correct to suggest that even labour which is necessary may be conductive to human fulfilment. What matters is how labour relations are organised. However, in this passage from *Capital*, Marx remains true to his vision in *Manuscripts* that the highest human capability is free and cooperative activity performed for its own sake. The question of the organisation of economic activity is important for Revolutionary Aristotelianism, but it has to be postponed until chapter 5.

To complete the discussion on the ethical foundations of Marx's thought, it is necessary to comment on some of the more theoretically "naive" passages about human liberation. In *The German Ideology,* Marx describes communist society thus: communism "makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic" (Marx 1998: 53). This passage is often quoted as an example of naive and impossible utopianism. We should not take every word of what Marx writes here at face value in order to understand the basic principle underlying this famous passage. Marx argues that human flourishing involves the development our most human powers and capabilities. We have to read this passage bearing in mind that, at the time it was written, it was usual for workers to labour 12- or even 14-hour shifts in the factory. Appalling working and living conditions and incredibly small salaries barely sufficient for physical survival are results of work relations that dehumanise the worker. Marx's aim was to liberate workers as much as

possible from the necessity to spend their lives working in debilitating conditions. Leisure, travel, enjoyment of arts, sociality, and ability to engage in varied activities are necessary for human well-being. We should read this passage as saying nothing more than this. It does not deny that particular activities may require a complete dedication of one's time. What matters for Marx is than every individual could direct her/his life freely. It does not mean that, in Marx's ideal society, everyone will become a film critic; rather, the possibility to see films that are not simple cheap entertainment but have artistic value develops one's ability to judge what a good film is. Marx's utopian ideal society is one that allows all people to live a life where they can best enjoy the achievement of human civilization.

3.3. Species-being and alienation re-interpreted through the category of practice

The growing body of scholarship on the ethical foundations of Marx's thought has led to increasing acceptance of Aristotelian undertones in Marx's critique of alienation under capitalism. MacIntyre himself attempted to interpret some of Marx's ideas through his own neo-Aristotelian vocabulary. In his essay "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken" (1998d; I will also analyse this essay in the next chapter dealing with revolutionary politics), MacIntyre presents his interpretation of Marx's attempt to break with the philosophical standpoint of civil society; the break that Marx conceptualises in his *Theses on Feuerbach*. Hence Marx's 10th thesis: "The standpoint of the old materialism is *'civil'* society; the standpoint of the new is *human* society or social humanity" (Marx, Engels 1998: 574). The standpoint of civil society is characterised by analytical priority of isolated individuals and their desires, which makes society an outcome of some sort of contract. Human relationships are characterised, MacIntyre summarises, through concepts "of utility, of contract, and of individual rights". Accordingly, the dominant moral philosophy under civil society will debate these terms and their application (MacIntyre 1998d: 223).

Marx argues that the standpoint of civil society cannot be overcome by theory alone. It requires a particular type of activity, one that Marx variously calls "objective activity" (1st thesis), "practical-critical", "revolutionary" (2nd thesis), "revolutionizing activity" (3rd thesis). Thus his call to change the world instead of interpreting it (11th thesis) should not be read as a call to reject theoretical reflection. What it calls for, as MacIntyre summarised, is a "particular type of practice, practice informed by a particular kind of theory rooted in that same practice" (ibid., 225).

MacIntyre focuses on Marx's term "objective [gegenständliche] activity". This term, argues MacIntyre, is taken from Fichte and Hegel, and it describes an "activity in which the end

or aim of the activity is such that by making that end their own individuals are able to achieve something of universal worth embodied in some particular form of practice through cooperation with other such individuals" (MacIntyre 1998d: 225). Marx's biggest failure, argues MacIntyre, was that he abandoned the philosophical project sketched out in *Theses* and never presented a developed theory of activity that breaks with bourgeois thought. If he had continued his philosophical studies of what was involved in overcoming the standpoint of civil society, Marx would have understood that the Aristotelian, and not the Hegelian, vocabulary captures best the type of activity that Marx was attempting to characterise. Thus MacIntyre offers an interpretation of "objective activity" that corresponds to his own theory of practices, internal goods and virtues:

> [T]he ends of any type of practice involving what Marx calls objective activity are characterizable antecedently to and independently of any characterization of the desires of the particular individuals who happen to engage in it. Individuals discover in the ends of any such practice goods common to all who engage in it, goods internal to and specific to that particular type of practice, which they can make their own only by allowing their participation in the activity to effect a transformation in the desires which they initially brought with them to the activity. Thus in the course of doing whatever has to be done to achieve those goods, they also transform themselves through what is at once change in their desires and an acquisition of those intellectual and moral virtues and those intellectual, psychical and imaginative skills necessary to achieve the goods of that particular practice. (ibid., 225-226)

So the theory of practice can characterise precisely that form of activity that Marx sketched in his *Theses*. MacIntyre claims that *Theses* marked Marx's break with his earlier Hegelian thought, but that it remained an unfinished project as Marx moved on to economic analysis. Having left this philosophical enterprise uncompleted, Marxism was thus vulnerable to succumbing to the same mode of thought that it attempted to break with. Interpreted in such a way, Marx's *Theses* becomes a singular text, marking a fundamentally new theoretical path that was never taken in the Marxist tradition. At the end of this essay, MacIntyre claims that Marxism suffered defeat because Marxists were unable to spell out the theory of revolutionary activity hinted at in *Theses,* and thus eventually embraced the same bourgeois categories of civil society. MacIntyre calls on "Marxists and ex-Marxists and post-Marxists of various kinds" (including himself) to learn the lessons of *Theses* and "start all over again" (ibid., 234). From this perspective, MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism is both an attempt to learn from Marx's mistakes and to reconceptualise his emancipatory project on different theoretical and

political grounds. I will continue the discussion on how MacIntyre's Aristotelian politics of locality is conceived as a continuation of the revolutionary project in chapters 4 and 5.

But it is possible to go further and argue that much more in Marx's thought can be reinterpreted in MacIntyrean/Aristotelian terms. MacIntyre's theory of practice can be used to reinterpret the ethical foundations of Marx's thought discussed above in the analysis of species-being and alienation. Such interpretation would have to begin by questioning the interpretation to which Marx's conception of nonalienated human activity is essentially aesthetic. Terry Eagleton claims that "Art is an image of nonalienated labour" (Eagleton 2011: 123) and "His [Marx's] model of good life was based on the idea of artistic self-expression" (ibid. 238). This claim somewhat contradicts another argument by Eagleton that Aristotle was a "mentor" for Marx and that "Marx himself was a true moralist in the tradition of Aristotle, though he did not always know that he was" (ibid., 159). Eagleton is of course correct that Marx is very much Aristotelian in his ethical thinking. But if it is so, then we should question the comparison to artistic activity.

It is true that art is the best example of an activity done freely, without any external compulsion and in the creative burst of an artist. It is the truest form of creative self-expression. But we should resist equating all nonalienated activity with art. To use art as a model to understand Marx's vision of nonalienated human action is only partially correct. It goes without saying that art can be alienated as much as any other activity. Art could provide a somewhat misleading model if it is understood in modern terms, as the creative expression of genius, which is rife with highly individualistic presuppositions. Marx's point is not that all human activities should be brought closer to art, but that freedom means engaging in a variety of activities in a free, cooperative, social manner. Art is only one of plurality of activities, or to use Marx's language, forms of production. But there is no reason why other activities should model themselves after art. There is an artistic element in most activities performed freely, but it is their unique nature and their unique ends that make them this particular type of activity and not something else. The internal goods of artistic creation are different from the internal goods of gardening or of scientific study. Thus the problem of nonalienated activity should be approached by acknowledging this plurality of human activities and their internal goods.

It is much more useful to think of the distinction between alienated and nonalienated activity in terms of practices, internal goods and excellences (virtues). A step in this direction was taken by Eugene Kamenka in his *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism* (1972). Kamenka constructs his argument in opposition to the aesthetic model which he claims to be correct only insofar as it points to the activity whose ends are not external to that activity. Kamenka proposes to think of Marx's distinction between alienated and nonalienated activity in ethical terms, i.e. in

terms of goods and wrongs. He argues that instead of thinking of nonalienated activity as simply aesthetic activity, we should understand it also as good activity, activity that creates a certain kind of social bond between individuals.

Kamenka describes nonalienated activity as one aimed at securing particular goods through social cooperation. Goods are not egotistic, but social; they have history and exist independently of any particular individual; and good activity involves self-transformation:

> They [goods] give the individual the capacity of transcending himself, of devoting himself to a movement of which he is merely a vehicle, which existed before him, exists in others beside him and will continue to exist after him. In so far as these goods exist within him, he feels no tension, no conflict, between him and others possessed by the same spirit. It is in this sense that Marx is rightly able to say that the opposition between individual and 'social' demands disappears, that wants and enjoyments lose their egoistic nature […]. (Kamenka 1972: 111)

Finally, based on the conception of goods Kamenka proposes the distinction between the producer and the consumer: for the producer, activity itself is the end, while the consumer subordinates various activities for external goals:

> The producer emphasizes activities, a way of life, a morality; he is stirred by production everywhere and brought together by the productive spirit with other producers. The consumer emphasizes ends, things to be secured; he subordinates himself and his activity to these ends; his sentiments are not productive but proprietary and consumptive; his relations with other consumers involve friction, hypocrisy and envy. (ibid. 113)

Kamenka's final conclusion is that "Marx's vision of Communism, then, is in no sense an 'artistic' vision; it rests on his sound, if unworked-out, perception of the characteristic organization and ways of working for goods; it rests, that is, on an ethical and not on an aesthetical distinction" (ibid.). Kamenka's arguments are important and provide a basis for a different understanding of Marx's ethical thinking than the aesthetic model. It points out that, for Marx, emancipation does not mean the aesthetization of all activities; it means releasing activities from their subordination to the external ends so that various and different activities could flourish and their internal goods could be achieved in free and cooperative manner. Kamenka himself was not thinking that his ethical reading of Marx is Aristotelian in any way. But his interpretation comes very close to MacIntyre's theory of practices. Even though in his Aristotelian writings MacIntyre never references Kamenka's work, he does have a good knowledge of it. MacIntyre has published a short review of Kamenka's book, claiming that

"This is one of the most valuable books yet written about Marx" and commending Kamenka's distinction between Marx's early ethical critique of society and his later focus on economic issues.[4]

Niko Noponen shows in greater detail how Marx's notion of alienation can be connected with MacIntyre's account of practices and virtues. According to Noponen:

> The modes of alienation characterised by Marx can be interpreted via MacIntyre's conception of practices as follows: If the person focuses or is forced to concentrate only on activities aiming at external goods, he or she is alienated form (1) forms of work that are good, meaningful, important, and enjoyable as such; (2) common understanding, shared experiences, mutual recognition, and acting together with other people; (3) personal relationships with fellow human beings; and, accordingly, (4) that which is essential and constitutive of human beings generally, or human nature. (Noponen 2011: 105)

Thus MacIntyre's concept of practice finds its way into Marxist scholarship. Practice, as discussed in chapter 1, is distinguished by its (a) cooperative and social nature, (b) extends moral and intellectual powers of the participants, and (c) is performed for the goods that are internal to the practice itself. The ideal of nonalienated activity that informs Marx's criticism of capitalism meets the characteristics of practice as defined by MacIntyre. Marx, of course, was not using the language of internal goods and virtues/excellences. However, his thought is fully compatible with virtue ethics, especially with MacIntyre's version of it, as argued in this chapter.

Indeed, Mészáros offers an interpretation of Marx's notion of alienation that allows for Marx's rejection of universal moral categories and at the same time accepts that Marx's critique is grounded in ethical assumptions. Marx on several occasions argued against moral philosophy in general. For example, in the characteristic passage from *The German Ideology* he and Engels attacked Kant as "whitewashing spokesman" of bourgeoisie who "made the materially motivated determinations of the will of the French bourgeois into *pure* self-determinations of "*free will*", of the will in and for itself, of the human will, and so converted it into purely ideological conceptual determinations and moral postulates" (Marx, Engels, 1998: 210). Marx's main point is that behind the supposed universalism of Kant's ethics stands a particular class

[4] The review appeared in *International Socialism* but it was not included in any of the collections of MacIntyre's essays. Nevertheless it is available at https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/macintyre/1963/xx/marxmoral.htm [last viewed 2016 10 15]

interest. This is the main reason of Marx's distrust of universal moral laws: universal moral standpoint is not possible in divided class societies (see also Blackledge 2012: 75).

But the fact that Marx's thought is supported by ethical ideals is not contradictory if we understand Marx's ethics, argues Mészáros, as different from universalistic modern theories of morality. Thus morality presupposed in Marx's theory of alienation should be understood as enabling: "Morality is a positive function of society: of a man struggling with the task of his own realization" (Mészáros 2005: 189). Interpreted this way, Marx's ethical considerations about alienation under capitalism could be seen as continuing the same Aristotelian ethical tradition that is founded, as argued by MacIntyre, on the distinction between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realised-his-essential-nature. Ethics of *aretai* then plays a positive role by facilitating the movement towards the realisation of human well-being.

3.4. The ideal of the *polis* in Marx's political thought

Marx's critique of capitalist economic relations is founded on ethical ideals about human well-being. The future communist society was conceived as such society in which material resources are fully subordinated to the interests of human flourishing so that every individual could have the best opportunity to develop her or his human powers. But it was not only the economic questions that mattered to Marx. To complete the discussion of Marx's thought and its relation to MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian ethics and politics it is necessary to focus on Marx's ideas about the political aspects of emancipation. Political, economic and ethical aspects of Marx's thought cannot be separated; they form a unity. And even if it is true that Marx was reluctant to give detailed descriptions of institutional forms under which the liberated humanity would organize itself, some political ideas can still be discerned in Marx's writings.

As any sphere of human organisation, politics can become alienated. This is most evident in Marx's analysis of the state. Hegel's philosophical system that described history as the growth in human freedom ended with praising the state and bureaucracy as the universal class. When Marx turned his critical eye on the actual Prussian state, he found nothing approaching the pompous Hegelian ideal of universality embodied in the state. Instead, he found a repressive military-bureaucratic regime that had nothing to do with the lofty ideals of general will or the common good. The state itself was the oppressor. In this early period, therefore, Marx formulated his political imperative: "the *categoric imperative to overthrow all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being" (Marx 1975: 182).

One of the most famous Marxist political conceptions is the withering away of the state. In his influential two-volume analysis of Marx's and Engel's political ideas, Richard N. Hunt

argues that Marx and Engels developed two theories of the state: parasitic state and class state (Hunt 1974 & 1985). Parasitic state theory describes state as an independent military-bureaucratic body that is separated from the rest of society (unelected and unaccountable) and governs in its own interest; such a state does not represent any class interest but stand outside class relations. This theory was originally based on Marx's experience of the Prussian state and was later expanded to include absolute monarchy, Bonapartism and what Marx called Asiatic despotism. The theory of class state was originally developed by Engels from his experience in Britain. Class state is probably the best know Marxist model, according to which the state expresses the interest of the capitalist class. We find the most familiar formulation of this theory in *The Manifesto* were the state is claimed to be "but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx, Engels 1976: 486).

States, as parasitic or class states, are expressions of the alienation of politics. Parasitic state stands as a dictator over the entire society; class state politically embodies the power of one social class over the others. Overcoming alienation, whether in economic or in political sphere, involves subordinating those institutions to human needs. As Mészáros summarised: "The alienating potentials inherent in the instruments and institutions of human intercourse can be controlled provided that they are recognized *as* instruments and consciously brought into relation with *human needs*" (Mészáros 2005: 248).

Marx's ideas about what is involved in overcoming political alienation is best characterised by his comments on the Paris Commune of 1871. He praised it as "essentially a working-class government", as "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour" (Marx 2010b: 212). The commune disbanded the military-bureaucratic administration of the old government and replaced it with the self-government of the people under universal suffrage. The Commune introduced self-governing bodies to replace centralized, bureaucratic rule: "Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in communes [...]" (ibid., 210).

This radical democratization of the political sphere is precisely what is meant by "withering away of the state" (see also Demirović 2014). The state withers away once the power concentrated in state institutions is dispersed through local democratic bodies and political activities are deprofessionalised: "It [the state] would cease to exist as a separate institution standing over society and run by professionals; public business would become the part-time or short-term activity of ordinary citizens, one activity among many they would pursue" (Hunt 1974: 81). Such political ideal bears close resemblance to the rule of amateurs in the Aristotelian *polis.* Indeed, Hunt recognises that Greek *polis* was had a strong influence on Marx's thought

and that the term *polis* can be substituted for Marx's terms commune or community (ibid., 219). Hunt sums up Marx's political ideal as "radical democracy without professionals".

"Dictatorship of the proletariat", at least as used by Marx and Engels, should also be understood to mean the democratisation of political process. The term has been variously misused and misinterpreted, even though, as Hunt convincingly argues, it was never a central concept in Marx's and Engels's political thinking; it was an expression used only a few times in very specific contexts. It was Lenin who expanded this concept to mean the necessary dictatorial powers of the revolutionary party in the transitional period from capitalism to communism. Unfortunately, the expression has become intimately tied with Marxist politics. The biggest mistake would be to treat Marx's concept of the proletarian dictatorship in a non-historical manner. We have to remember that it was formulated when the majority of people in European countries had no political rights and suffrage was extremely limited and tied to wealth. The majority of the population was literally outside the political system. The state was an alien power, since it represented a very small propertied minority, and popular masses had no influence on the political agenda except when they resorted to direct rebellion. Dictatorship of the proletariat was intended to mean nothing else than popular suffrage under which the majority (proletariat) were able to dominate the minority of capitalists. At the end of his life, Engels expressed this clearly once more: "The working class can only come to power under the form of a democratic republic. This is even the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (Engels 1990: 227).

What about revolution? Marx's and Engels's take on political transformation is pragmatic and realistic. Their views change in response to changes in political realities. Hunt discovers four different political strategies in the political thought of Marx and Engels, ranging from a majority proletarian revolution to peaceful democratic reforms. However, Marx and Engels remained realistic about the attitudes of economic and political elites: even in the case of democratic reforms, it is difficult to imagine that the radical measures advocated by Marx and Engels would be implemented without the organised resistance from the ruling class. As Hunt puts it, Marx was radical not in his ideas about political means to emancipation, but in the ends it aimed to achieve (Hunt 1984: 363).

Marx believed that emancipation can only be achieved by people themselves. Emancipation involves abolishing relations of subordination, thus it cannot be brought by some authority representing the true interests of those it aims to emancipate: "the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves" (Marx 2010a: 82). Marx was very critical of all the socialist projects aimed at emancipating the working class through

some governmental redistribution schemes or by professional revolutionary vanguards advocated by Louis Auguste Blanqui.

Nothing is more alien to Marx than the idea that individual freedom could be sacrificed for collective needs; it is equally false that Marx calls for state-enforced economic equality. Already in *Manuscripts* Marx warned against "crude and unthinking communism" that "negates the *personality* of man in every sphere"; communism as "envy and desire to level down". The result of crude communism is not emancipation, it is barbarity: "abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilisation, and the return to the *unnatural* simplicity of the *poor*, unrefined man who has no needs and who has not even reached the stage of private property, let alone gone beyond it" (Marx 1992c: 346). Marx's vision is completely different: collective self-government that would allow individuality to flourish. Marx's political ideal was democratic decentralisation where the primary political arena is a self-governing community.

We can now connect the three levels of Marx's thought discussed in this chapter: ethical, economic and political. Marx's ideal was a society that is directed to development of human potentiality through collective self-government. Not only the political sphere has to become democratic in a much broader sense than the liberal representative system, but the democratic decision-making must be extended into the economic sphere. Economic activity would lose its alienating character once it is reorganized under the democratic control of the producers and the working day is shortened to leave enough time for other types of fulfilling activity (including shared decision making). Eagleton pointed to this connection between shortening of the working day and self-government: "As Marx insists, socialism also requires a shortening of the working day – partly to provide men and women with the leisure for personal fulfilment, partly to create time for the business of political and economic self-government" (Eagleton 2011: 18).

Marxism thus continues the political project of the goods of excellence as it was analysed in Chapter 2. The analysis of alienation and political community in Marx's thought reveals that there is a close relation between the ideals expressed in Marx's writing and the line of thought that MacIntyre identifies as the Aristotelian tradition. In his analysis of Marx's concept of justice, James Daly argues that Marx is basically an Aristotelian thinker: "Marx's idea of the human good is analogous to Aristotle's *eudaimonia*" (Daly 1996: 117). Daly also claims that the classical natural law tradition is compatible with Marx's critique of capitalism. Thus Daly sees a continuous line of thought that runs from Aristotle, through Aquinas, to Marx, as MacIntyre does in his own writings.

Daly formulates his interpretation of Marx's political ideal in ethical categories that are similar to MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian vocabulary: Marx imagined "*an unalienated community organized and oriented towards the good of each person and of the community as the whole*"

(Daly 1996: 63-64, italics in the original). Such a MacIntyrean/Aristotelian rereading of Marx is also evident in Paul Blackledge's *Marxism and Ethics: Freedom, Desire, and Revolution* (2012). Blackledge claims that "Marx's ethics amounts to a modern version of Aristotle's account of those practices underpinning the virtues through which individuals are able to flourish within communities" (Blackledge 2012: 3).

The Neo-Aristotelian line of thought developed by MacIntyre and some contemporary readings of Marx arrive at a close dialogue. But the difference between Marxism and Revolutionary Aristotelianism remains at the level of appropriate political practice. The question that remains is this: should MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian critique be read in the general Marxist political framework, or does it point to a different form of politics than advocated by Marxism? The first perspective would appropriate MacIntyre's account of practices and virtues as a supplement to Marxist critique that describes in different terms the ethical ideals of emancipation. Blackledge represents the first alternative by appropriating MacIntyre's account of practices and virtues from the perspective of classical working class politics. Emancipatory politics should be focused on organising working-classes to overthrow capitalist relations and institute socialism. MacIntyre himself argues that emancipatory struggles must be envisaged on different grounds. Thus it is necessary to analyse MacIntyre's relation to Marxist political project and the reasons for MacIntyre's gradual distancing from it. This is the task of the next chapter.

4. FROM REVOLUTION TO LOCAL RESISTANCES

Chapter 3 concluded that the ethical foundations of the Marxist critique of capitalism can be reinterpreted using the concepts of MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian ethics. MacIntyre's own thought remains closely tied with the Marxist problematic, even though MacIntyre distanced himself from Marxist politics. In this chapter I focus on the development of MacIntyre's early thought and his gradual rejection of revolutionary Marxism. This and the next chapter focus on community as a form of struggle in Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory.

4.1. Freedom, desire and revolution

Neil Davidson commented that "Reading MacIntyre's work during this [early Marxist] period can produce a dizzying effect, as the author moves back and forth between one assessment and other, often in quick succession, suggesting at the very least some uncertainty on his part as to his own conclusions" (Davidson 2011: 167). This comment reveals an important aspect of MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism – its undogmatic, searching, and doubting nature. Davidson himself among others has discussed MacIntyre's early works and situated them in the general intellectual and political climate of the time. For my own purposes I will concentrate on several aspects of the period to sketch MacIntyre's changing approach to the question of emancipatory politics.

The first important theoretical contribution to Marxist thought was provided by MacIntyre in his essay "Notes from the Moral Wilderness", published in two parts from 1958-59. MacIntyre here tries to articulate a moral theory that would express the ideals of emancipation. He was concerned with what kind of moral standpoint would provide us with the authoritative standards to judge the present and to act in order to realise the elements of human nature that remain unrealised in present class societies. MacIntyre attempts to disengage Marxism from a mechanistic view of history that was propagated by Stalinism and also by liberal critics who portrayed Marxism in the same mechanistic and deterministic fashion. MacIntyre attempts to save the conception of historical development but without any mechanistic distortions. He argued that any genuine morality must emerge from historical experiences of humanity. What is needed is "a theory which treats what emerges in history as providing us with a basis for our standards, without making the historical process morally sovereign or its progress automatic" (MacIntyre 2008e: 57).

In order to develop such moral theory, MacIntyre connects desire, history and revolutionary politics. Not only must moral standards emerge from the lessons of our shared

history, they must also be intimately connected with our desires: "(W)e need a morality which orders our desires and yet expresses them" (MacIntyre 2008e: 59). But all morality under capitalism is class based, argues MacIntyre. Thus in a Lukácsian manner MacIntyre argues that the consciousness of an isolated bourgeois individual is a false consciousness while the experiences of the proletariat provide the workers with the standards of a new humanist morality of classless society. The characterisation of the working class life here is yet highly idealised, accepting the thesis of spontaneity of socialist consciousness that MacIntyre soon came to reject. MacIntyre repeats Marx's own characteristics of the proletarian experience as quoted in Chapter 3. Morality that connects history and desire is the morality of the proletariat: "The experience of human equality and unity that is bred in industrial working-class life is equally a precondition of overcoming men's alienation […]" (ibid., 65).

MacIntyre understands capitalism as a contradictory system: on the one hand, it creates the working classes that are able to rediscover our shared desires, and on the other, it frustrates the realisation of this new morality. This is why the rediscovery of a humanist morality is revolutionary: "One meets the anarchic individualist desires which a competitive society breeds in us, by a rediscovery of the deeper desire to share what is common in humanity, to be divided neither from them nor from oneself, to be man" (ibid.). It is necessary to point out that MacIntyre uses the term *re*discovery. The moral theory that MacIntyre looks for is not new in its essence. It already existed and was lost over the course of historical development. MacIntyre demonstrates this claim with a highly schematised history of morality. The link between desire and morality was clearly stated in Greek thought and survived in various forms through the Middle Ages until the Reformation. With the Reformation the rules of morality became abstract laws that had to be obeyed by an essentially sinful human being. Humanity was fallen from grace and human desires were evil. Moral law and desire were separated and understood to be contradictory. The dialectic of capitalism allows us again to rediscover the link between desire and morality in the revolutionary class (ibid, 63-65). We can see how this schematic history already presupposes the arguments of *After Virtue* about the disintegration of moral discourse and the need for its recovery. The essential difference is that *After Virtue* lacks the agency of the proletariat.

MacIntyre in this essay is relying on the theory that the crises of capitalism is the factor that will force people to become more conscious of their true needs and of the necessity to overthrow the capitalist system. The future of socialism depends not on the objective laws of the historical development but on the new humanist consciousness born out of the dissatisfaction with capitalism:

> Whether one makes it at all will depend on whether capitalism places men in a position in which so deep dissatisfaction is born that only a realistic answer to the question 'What do I really want?' can be given. A history of false consciousness is a history of evasions of this question. (MacIntyre 2008e: 65).

At the early period MacIntyre assumed that contemporary societies were already in a period of transition to socialism. Already in his very first book *Marxism: An Interpretation* MacIntyre argued that the Marxist prediction of the end of capitalism is becoming a reality: "(W)hat is collapsing is not capitalist *economy*, but capitalist *civilization*" (MacIntyre 1953: 96). Marx predicted that one of the causes of the end of capitalism would be the increasing misery of the workers. This prediction turned out to be untrue, as standards of living actually increased. But capitalism fails as a civilization because "it has offered freedom without security". There are two proletariats in capitalist societies: workers and intellectuals, two groups of people, argues MacIntyre, that do not belong to this civilization as their values are foreign to a culture of competitive individualism. Thus capitalism is challenged by the workers organised in unions and by cultural attacks on capitalist civilization by intellectuals and artists (ibid., 98). All the preconditions for the realization of human freedom are here; what is needed is the revolution itself.

Soon MacIntyre rejects the theory of the spontaneous consciousness of the proletariat and endorses the necessity of a Leninist-type vanguard party. This change is discernible in the essay "Freedom and Revolution" (2008b, originally published in 1960). In this essay MacIntyre, following Hegel and Marx, argues that freedom is the essence of human beings. Freedom as the essence of humanity is not the negative freedom of liberals, but the positive freedom defined as the control of one's life and the fullest expression of human potentiality: "the problem of freedom is not the problem of the individual against society but the problem of what sort of society we want and what sort of individuals we want to be" (MacIntyre 2008b: 129). The problem of freedom taken to its full conclusion implies a total rejection of existing capitalist societies as unfree. Freedom requires revolution, a total change in social relationships: "The road to freedom is the road out of what we are" (ibid. 131).

MacIntyre maintained that welfare capitalism is still a society of confinement in the same way that classical laisser-faire capitalism was. The reason for this is that fundamental decisions are still in the hands of capitalists and the majority of people have little control over their lives. Even the labour unions, which supposedly should express the collective power of workers, under welfare capitalism are bureaucratic structures integrated into the capitalist status quo: so the individual worker is confronted by a labour union "as part of the alien power that

dominates and shapes his life" (MacIntyre 2008b: 127). The ideals of self-determination through radical democracy are not realised so long as there remains the powers of capital and state bureaucracy. And even though welfare states have raised the material quality of life for the majority of people, they are still alienated societies so long as the majority remains passive subjects of the regime. The essential aim of socialism is not just higher wages but a radical change in social relationships: the creation of a truly free and democratic society.

While arguing that socialism means democracy, MacIntyre maintains that to speak of freedom one must speak of organisation: "only within *some* organizational form can human freedom be embodied" (ibid., 129). Freedom is not an individualist notion. Freedom is always collective freedom; a freedom through some sort of organisation. The answer to what type of organisation could embody this ideal was clearly a Leninist type of revolutionary party: "The path to freedom must be by means of some organization which is dedicated not to building freedom but to moving the working class to build it. The necessity for this is the necessity for the vanguard party" (ibid., 132). MacIntyre at that time maintained the Leninist position that the majority of people do not have the necessary revolutionary consciousness to bring about change as their existence is one of alienation under capitalism. Nevertheless, they are frustrated and do not find satisfaction in the life contemporary societies offer them. MacIntyre argued that welfare capitalism de-politicises the working class precluding any theory of spontaneity of socialist consciousness. Thus, contra Lukács, working class activity makes people unable to understand the capitalist system as a totality (MacIntyre 2008g: 239). That makes the question of leadership and education even more pressing. The necessary consciousness for the realization of freedom has to be formed through a revolutionary organisation that unites workers and intellectuals.

It is important to stress that for MacIntyre the main feature of the vanguard party is its educational nature.[5] Such a party is first of all a community of collective education into the limits of the present and the possibilities of the future. It is not a group of experts or revolutionary leaders that bring liberation to the masses; people have to liberate themselves. The party only helps to move them towards the realization of their ideals. Thus, paradoxically, freedom can only be achieved through the organisation that aims to unify and centralise. The individualist notions of freedom, according to this position, are dangerously ideological, as the isolated individual consciousness too easily falls back on a bourgeois ideology. Thus the ethic of socialism is summarised in the following way:

[5] One is tempted to raise a question whether, to a certain point, the idea of "community" in MacIntyre's later works is the substitute for the notion of "party" he developed in early works. Both, as conceived by MacIntyre, provide the education into the human good and are the forms of resistance to the alienating powers of modernity.

> So the individual who tries most to live as an individual, to have a mind entirely of his own, will in fact make himself more and more likely to become in his thinking a passive reflection of the socially dominant ideas; while the individual who recognizes his dependence on others has taken a path which can lead to an authentic independence of mind. (MacIntyre 2008b: 133)

It is crucial to register how the theme of dependence and authenticity in this passage reminds us of the central ideas of *Dependent Rational Animals*, a book that was written from the (Thomistic) Aristotelian perspective. In this book, as well as in his early Marxist works, MacIntyre was concerned with a critique of liberal individualism and argued that authentic practical reasoning requires social structures that acknowledge human dependence. In the Marxist period such social relations were argued to reside within working class organisations that united the workers in a collective struggle to realise more humane and free society.

MacIntyre's argument on the need for political organisation that would help the working class to realise a more humane world was united with his active participation as a philosopher in various Marxist organisations. The transition to socialism is not automatic and cannot be predicted on some supposedly objective laws of the historical development of human societies. As Paul Blecledge and Neil Davidson argued, MacIntyre's association with working-class politics was not based on some dogmatic belief in the historical mission of the proletariat. MacIntyre's philosophical position underlying his political hopes that human freedom will be realised through the proletarian revolution can best be understood by a reference to the Marxism of Lucien Goldmann. Goldmann's *The Hidden God* (2013, first published in 1955) was praised by MacIntyre as "a model of how to write moral philosophy" (MacIntyre 1971a: 86). Such high praise demands a closer look at the work of Goldmann and its influence on MacIntyre's own thought. MacIntyre's non-determinist view on the transition to socialism and his reasons for associating himself with Marxist politics are best understood through Goldmann's conception of the wager.

Goldmann's original contribution to Marxism was his analysis of the tragic world vision expressed in Pascal's *Pensées* and the tragedies of Racine. Goldmann, influenced by the early works of Lukács, developed the concept of world vision as "whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which links together the members of a social group (a group which, in most cases, assumes the existence of social class) and which opposes them to members of other social groups" (Goldmann 2013: 17). Goldmann analysed "tragic vision" as a world view characterised by the perceived absolute incompatibility between the world and the deepest values of humanity. A tragic individual, according to Goldmann, is the one who sees an immeasurable gulf between the existing world and the values that give meaning to human life. All forms of

tragic vision, according to Goldmann, "express a deep crisis in the relationship between man and his social and spiritual world" (Goldmann 2013: 41). A tragic individual desires for unity within the world, for community or God, demands absolute justice, but sees the vanity of the actual world, its fragmented, limited nature, and existence without value and rejects all the possible alternatives that this world may offer as false alternatives. Tragic individuals continue to live in the world but remains strangers to it. Because of this paradox, this distance from the world while remaining in the world, the tragic vision, according to Goldmann, is the source of the most advanced realism (ibid., 56).

The tragic person believes in moral absolutes, but the world provides no ground for a belief in such values. Pascal must believe in God, he must believe that there are other values than those found in existing societies to explain his existence, but at the same time the world offers him no proof of God's being. Thus the famous saying of Pascal: "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me". God is absent, hidden from the world and does not reveal itself. Because the tragic person can find no definitive proof of the existence of God in the world, his belief takes on the form of a wager. He/she must wager on the existence of God and live as if God existed. It is a solitary life "under the gaze of the hidden God" (ibid., 333).

From his analysis of this tragic vision and wager Goldmann develops an original Marxist philosophy. Goldmann argues that tragic vision is transcended by dialectic thought (of Hegel and more importantly, of Marx): dialectics puts the elements of tragic vision into a historical perspective of human progress. Essential human values can be realised in this world by collective action aimed at the transformation of the world. Dialectical thought historicises this tragic vision: the world and human values are no longer absolutely distinct; any incommensurability is transitory. The dialectical vision places a wager not on the existence of a transcendental God but on our own collective actions necessary to bring our deepest values into existence:

> Marxist faith is faith in the future which men make for themselves in and through history. Or, more accurately, in the future that we must make for ourselves by what we do, so that this faith becomes a 'wager' which we make that our actions will, in fact, be successful. The transcendental element present in this faith is not supernatural and does not take us outside or beyond history; it merely takes us beyond the individual. (Goldmann 2013: 90)

The conception of wager is developed by Goldmann into a general theory of human knowledge and action. Every science, be it of the social or natural world, starts from this initial premise, a wager. In the context of physical science, it is a theoretical wager that future research

can prove or disprove. In case of social life, the wager is both theoretical and practical. Our actions are informed by prior decisions about the structure of the world. Our social world is practical thus every action in the social world presupposes a prior 'wager', a value commitment. As Marx argued in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, the truth about the world is essentially a practical question. A wager, argues Goldmann, unites theory and practice, making the validity of the initial wager a practical question (Goldmann 2013: 95).

Goldmann's form of Marxism should be understood as a direct critique of any materialist determinism. Goldmann escaped the fetishism of historical necessity that prompted so many intellectuals to embrace Stalinism in the belief that, in the final analysis, it is serving the historical movement towards communist ideals. Goldmann thus comments on the idea of progress: we cannot prove that progress existed or that it will exist because it is linked to human action and depends on it (ibid. 92). Goldmann's work, even if preoccupied with tragedy, is in the end about the possibility of hope. As Mitchell Cohen argues, Goldmann's work provided the hope for emancipation to a world that just survived the horrors of Hitler and Stalin (Cohen 1994: 7). Despite historical defeats and tragedies, Goldmann still argues that the possibility of a 'truly human society' cannot be objectively denied, and that we should not accept the existing world with all its limits and deficiencies as the only possible world. A tragic dialectician refuses to accept the actual state of the world as the only possibility and wages on the collective action of humanity to realise its ideals.

MacIntyre was highly impressed by Goldmann's work. He accepted the theory of wager, commenting that "one cannot first understand the world and only then act in it". We are always in the world and thus already acting and shaping the world: "[how] one understands the world will depend in part on the decisions implicit in one's already taken actions. The wager of action is unavoidable" (MacIntyre 1971a: 84). In the case of Marxism, the world is understood in reference to the future that Marxist politics aims to realize. But this future is not given objectively; history has no law-like objective movement: "(W)e wage on it not as spectators, but as actors pledged to bring it into being" (ibid., 85). Given MacIntyre's attempt to formulate Marxist moral philosophy, Goldmann's Marxism unsurprisingly was very attractive: it completely breaks with any form of economic determinism and grounds itself in the desire for a better society that ultimately depends only on our collective will and action. Goldmann's work combined the essential elements that MacIntyre was looking for: desire and history. As Blackledge and Davidson have argued, MacIntyre's involvement with working-class politics was based on such "goldmannian" wager (Blackledge, Davidson 2008: xxxvi)

MacIntyre has gradually acknowledged that the belief of the working-class to realise democratic socialism was much more difficult to sustain. Marxism was founded on the belief

that capitalism is an anarchic system of production that periodically plunges into crises. Such anarchy would radicalise workers and they would be the force that transforms capitalism into socialism as a rationally controlled system of production. In "Prediction and Politics" (published in 1963) MacIntyre argues that Marxists rightfully raised the question of working class consciousness but they ignored the issue of capitalist consciousness. Instead of a predicted growth in working class consciousness, argues MacIntyre, what growths is capitalist consciousness. This means that capitalism becomes more and more stable but this stabilisation is coupled with the diminishing of working class revolutionary spirit: "(C)apitalism was transformed by conscious, intelligent innovation, while working-class consciousness suffered diminution after diminution" (MacIntyre 2008f: 256). The capital class learned to organise and manage capitalist crises and the important factor in this process was the realization that it is in the long term interest of capitalism to keep workers at least partially satisfied. So an increase in standards of living, a growth in the need for skilled labour, differentiated salaries and growing competition inside the labour force led to its increasing fragmentation. Labour unions and social democratic parties became domesticated by responding "to the capitalist invitations to persuade workers that it is within the capitalist framework that their hope lies" (ibid., 258). Working classes gradually became more and more passive and lost their revolutionary spirit and collective power. At the end of this essay MacIntyre still claims that the survival of capitalism is not inevitable, but it is clear that the transition to socialism became very problematic.

4.2. Breaking with Marxist politics

With *Marxism and Christianity,* published in 1968, MacIntyre has distanced himself from the Marxist theoretical and political project. Marxism, according to MacIntyre, gradually lost its organic link with working class activity. Marxism started as a critique of ideology and a theory of practice of how to break from the alienating culture of capitalism. But working classes did not historically develop as Marxism predicted they would and they gradually lost their revolutionary capacity. Thus Marxism, losing this organic link with the social movements, became nothing else but another form of ideology. Marxism became, writes MacIntyre:

> a set of "views" which stand in no kind of organic relationship to an individual's social role or identity, let alone his real position in the class structure. And in becoming like this, Marxism has been "practiced" in precisely the same way as that in which religious beliefs have been practiced in modern secularized societies. (MacIntyre 1984: 123)

Marxism lost its function as a theory guiding working class struggles and became an ideological mask worn by brutal regimes as well as a source of posturing for radical intellectuals. Despite this, MacIntyre still regarded highly the achievements of Marxism. It was the only mode of thought that had such scope as Christianity once had. It provided an interpretation of the world and the individual's place within the historical drama. It directed social forces to the overcoming of exploitation and the construction of a better future. It pointed toward the formation of new subjectivities that could overcome the limitations of the established social order (ibid., 112). While accepting Marxist critique that Christianity is mostly socially reactionary, MacIntyre's argues that some versions of Christianity, especially the early movement, had an emphasis on social transformation. Marxism and (at least some versions of) Christianity established hope as a social virtue. Liberalism, on the contrary, abandons such aspirations: "For liberals the future has become the present enlarged" (ibid., 115). Thus, while MacIntyre eventually distanced himself both from Christianity because of its social reactionary content and from Marxism because of all its failures, limitations and distortions, he still maintained that the "Marxist project remains the only one we have for re-establishing hope as a social virtue" (ibid., 117).

This rejection of Marxism did not mean that MacIntyre also rejected any aspirations for radical democratic emancipation. Those aspirations are once again made evident in MacIntyre's critique of Marcuse's work in *Marcuse*, published in 1970. This book is rarely given much attention in MacIntyre's scholarship (with the positive exception of D'Andrea 2006).[6] One reason for this may be the tone of the book: it looks more like a personal attack on Marcuse than a serious study of his works. Nevertheless, for our argument the importance lies not in whether MacIntyre was right in his assessment of Marcuse but in the theoretical position that MacIntyre articulated in his critique. This book contains both his position that the Marxist political project is over for good and at the same time an affirmation of hope for a radical democratic emancipation.

Most of the themes developed in the book repeat the earlier assessment of Marcuse in "Herbert Marcuse: From Marxism to Pessimism" (MacIntyre 2008c, first published in 1967). It is worth reading both works together. MacIntyre starts with Lukács' claim that Marxist historical analysis has to be applied to Marxism itself; meaning that Marxism itself is the

[6] Jeffrey Nicholas (2012), who attempts to read MacIntyre in connection with the works of the Frankfurt School, mentions the book only to discard it. Knight (2007) quotes important passages from the book but otherwise does not give it any special attention. As to D'Andrea's account, nevertheless his assessment of MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism is highly unsatisfactory. It leaves many important elements without consideration (in a book that otherwise provides detailed comments to a very large number of less known and less significant essays): for example, such central essay as 'Marxism and Freedom' is not even mentioned.

product of a particular historical epoch and any serious assessment of Marxism will have to identify those elements which are peculiar to 19th century bourgeois society. One of these elements is the separation of economic and political life that leads one to understand economy as an independent law-governed sphere. This peculiarly bourgeois position is then reproduced in the deterministic forms of Marxism that separate the economic basis from ideological superstructure and grant the basis for its independent existence. This element received its most crude and simplistic version in Stalinist ideology. Thus, according to MacIntyre, Marxism is flawed because it was not able to break with the peculiarly bourgeois categories of analysis. It seems that MacIntyre is rejecting his earlier attempts to formulate Marxist theory that would be free from mechanistic base-superstructure analogy. He now clearly equates Marxism with such theory that he once saw as a distortion.

Marx's prediction of the end of capitalism and the future of socialism were based on empirical analysis of the actual character of the working class movement and the tendencies of capitalism. Marxism must have the capacity for self-criticism and must be open to reconsider its central theses in light of changing realities. MacIntyre's charges Marcuse with the inability to make these conclusions, an inability that leads Marcuse to falsely interpret Marxism and to make false conclusions about contemporary societies. Any theoretical progress in Marxism has to be based on the analysis of the changing character of contemporary societies and should be able to identify the subversive forces from empirical realities. Marcuse, on the contrary, reifies the working-class to the conclusion that it is only the industrial working class that could replace capitalism with socialism. If this class becomes domesticated, as Marcuse argues in *One Dimensional Man,* then the prospect of revolution is lost. MacIntyre points that this schematism blinds Marcuse to the "specifically contemporary negative forces" – it has to be said that MacIntyre himself never specified what those forces were – and falls back on the false sociology that sees contemporary societies as integrated wholes.[7] MacIntyre argues that Marcuse's analysis is based on the assumption that only absolute material deprivation radicalises the workers. Thus Marcuse can argue that the rising consumption standards of the working class in welfare states make them passive and apolitical. MacIntyre rejects such a position by arguing that an increased economic well-being "alters the horizons of possibility": it produces new needs and desires, new standards based on which people assess "their deserts and their rights". Conflict is generated, concludes MacIntyre, not by the absolute, but by relative deprivation

[7] The same charge of totalizing the existing societies into integrated wholes was raised by MacIntyre in an earlier assessment of Marcuse's book *Soviet Marxism*, where MacIntyre accuses Marcuse of perpetuating official Soviet image of its society as unitary monolith. Against Marcuse, MacIntyre points to "the multifarious voices of living Russian socialist consciousness" (MacIntyre 2008d: 78). MacIntyre is here repeating the Trotskyist hope for the new democratic workers revolution that would free Soviet society from the grips of totalitarian bureaucracy.

(MacIntyre 2008c: 346-347). Contemporary societies are still the sites of social conflict but the nature of the players is changing. Marxism must then address itself to the changing social composition of contemporary societies.

But changing social realities make the classical form of Marxism inadequate to characterise contemporary conflicts and forces of liberation. In *Marcuse* MacIntyre claims:

> Indeed one might write the history of the age which Marxism illuminated so much more clearly than any other doctrine did, the period from 1848 to 1929, as one in which Marx's view of the progress of capitalism was substantially correct, but at the end of which when the Marxist script for the world drama required the emergence of the European working-class as the agent of historical change, the working-class turned out to be quiescent and helpless. (MacIntyre 1973: 43)

Marxism sought to explain the formation of particular social classes and then to inform the actions of social agents within. Marxist project of emancipation was based on the hope that one particular social class – the proletariat – would act as the universal emancipatory subject. MacIntyre now takes that the failure of world revolution after the First World War proves that the wager on the proletarian revolution is no longer realistic. On the other hand, just because Marxism was so closely bound with political practice and the perspective of the revolution, it is also not possible to keep some ideal Marxist theory purged from actual historical experiences. MacIntyre formulates this conclusion in the following manner: "It follows that by the present time to be faithful to Marxism we have to cease to be Marxists; and whoever now remains a Marxist is thereby discarded Marxism" (MacIntyre 1973: 61).

The main attack on Marcuse is focused on his characterisation of the agents of emancipation. Following the theory of the domestication of workers Marcuse welcomed the upheavals of '68, but, according to MacIntyre, without an empirically based social theory Marcuse mistook all the anti-systemic movements of the time as emancipatory agents. Thus he produced a highly eclectic list of revolutionary forces: students, black radicals of urban suburbs, national liberation forces in Vietnam and Cuba, Cultural Revolution in China and so on. But to be against the system is not the same as to be an agent of universal emancipation (ibid. 88). Thus Marcuse, according to MacIntyre, falsely welcomed all self-defined revolutionary vanguards as the forces that would bring about the liberation of the masses of indifferent and domesticated Westerners. By combining the conclusion of *One Dimensional Man* with the salutation to the "new vanguards", MacIntyre argues, we see that Marcuse's ideas lean towards elitism dangerous to any emancipatory project. MacIntyre maintained that the majority of people

are capable of self-emancipation. All the essential points of this intervention to Marcuse's work are summed up in the final sentences of *Marcuse*:

> One cannot liberate people from above; one cannot re-educate them at this fundamental level. As the young Marx saw, men must liberate themselves. The only education that liberates is self-education. To make men objects of liberation by others is to assist in making them passive instruments, is to cast them for the role of inert matter to be moulded into forms chosen by the elite. The majority of men in advanced industrial societies are often confused, unhappy and conscious of their lack of power; they are often also hopeful, critical and able to grasp immediate possibilities of happiness and freedom. Marcuse underrates most men as they are; the false contempt for the majority into which his theory leads him underpins policies that would in fact produce just that passivity and that irrationalism with which he charges contemporary society (MacIntyre 1973: 92)

Despite his rejection of Marxism, MacIntyre still kept hope for the emancipation that could be produced by the contradictory nature of capitalist societies. Thus MacIntyre here is still maintaining his theoretical position that the development of capitalism produces in the majority of people new desires and hope of freedom whose realisation is frustrated by the same capitalist system. This contradiction is the source of revolutionary consciousness. Unfortunately MacIntyre's position remained ambivalent: despite the claim that the majority is capable of self-emancipation he remained either critical or silent about the social movements of the time. MacIntyre in *Marcuse* dismissed student protests[8] as "parent-financed revolts", "the new children's crusade" (ibid., 89) and did not provide any comment about other struggles of the period. MacIntyre distanced himself from the emancipatory politics at a time when it experienced one of the most significant outbursts that influenced a new generation of political radicals.

Goldmann eventually came to the conclusion that the working class is no longer the privileged historical agent capable of revolutionary change he thought it was but just before his death in 1970 he welcomed the radicalism of '68 as a new moment of hope (Cohen 1994: 9-10). MacIntyre also accepted that Marxist hopes of the proletarian revolution were proved to be false but for him 1968 was but a confused episode of pretentious pseudo radicalism. He still maintained that people must emancipate themselves but at this time he was not able to conceptualise the agency of emancipation. Politically, MacIntyre distanced himself from

[8] It must be noted that MacIntyre later took a much more balanced view: student revolts were the result of deep and long crisis of Western universities (MacIntyre 1990: 235-236).

Marxist politics of proletarian revolution but he still rejected the capitalist world and refused to compromise with it.

In his essays written in the 70's that prepared the arguments of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre maintained that the authority of moral standards is provided by dramatic narratives of various collectivities of which the individual is a part:

> The enacted narrative of the individual's life derives its point from its place in the enacted narrative of the group or the institution. And this, in turn, may derive its significance from some more extended narrative. The most basic moral question for each agent is, therefore: of what histories am I a part? (MacIntyre 1981: 134)

From the list of examples that MacIntyre gives of such enacted group narratives ("the house of Atreus, the people of Israel, the city of Rome, the revolutionary proletariat") the struggle of the proletariat is, tellingly, the only modern one. As in every dramatic narrative, its moral compass is defined by the actual struggles and virtues displayed in those struggles. So the moral content of proletarian dramatic narrative is defined by, for example, the Paris Commune. MacIntyre is still acknowledging the immense moral value of working class politics.

MacIntyre stressed that the reified moral language under modernity requires one to make a decision and choose to which collective narrative one wants to bind himself: "Each of us therefore has to choose both with whom we wish to be morally bound and by what ends, rules, and virtues we wish to be guided" (MacIntyre 2002: 259). This position is similar to Sartrean existentialism, only MacIntyre is arguing that the individual is not "morally naked" before making a choice: "For our social past determines that each of us has some vocabulary with which to frame and to make his choice" (ibid.). MacIntyre's own initial choice (a wager) was the revolutionary proletarian movement. This explains why MacIntyre, being critical of much of Marxist tradition, was not an academic Marxist, observing capitalist societies and proletarian struggles from a distance, but one who engaged actively in various revolutionary groups.[9] MacIntyre understands clearly the difficulties this choice creates for the intellectual in capitalist societies. In his early essay "Breaking the Chains of Reason" MacIntyre writes that there are two alternative paths for the intellectual in contemporary world. One is exemplified by J.M. Keynes, "an intellectual guardian of the established order" who provided new policies of manipulation to keep capitalism going and who made personal fortunes from this. The alternative path is exemplified by Trotsky, who defended "the powers of conscious and rational

[9] Neil Davidson aptly characterised MacIntyre's Marxism: "his was not the type of academic Marxism that became depressingly familiar after 1968, in which theoretical postures were adopted, according to the dictates of intellectual fashion, by scholars without the means or often even the desire to intervene in the world" (Davidson 2011: 153).

human effort" at the cost of being persecuted and eventually killed. "I think of them at the end, Keynes with his peerage, Trotsky with an icepick in his skull. These are the twin lives between which intellectual choice in our society lies" (MacIntyre 2008a: 166). Where, at the time, MacIntyre's choice rested was made clear by the last sentence of his essay, in which he repeated Marx's XI[th] thesis on Feuerbach. In the 70's MacIntyre found an alternative position: his emigration to the United States allowed him as an intellectual to get some distance from the political realities of the time and become a spectator and not an active player in the world-historical drama of the time.[10] The time of active political engagement was over.

4.3. "The New Dark Ages"

After Virtue expressed a new standpoint and gave a blueprint for a new political project. The famous last paragraphs of the book repeated the conclusion that the Marxist revolutionary project had failed. Here MacIntyre acknowledges that his political conclusions are the outcome of his critical engagement with Trotskyism:

> A Marxist who took Trotsky's last writings with great seriousness would be forced into a pessimism quite alien to the Marxist tradition, and in becoming a pessimist he would in an important way have ceased to be a Marxist. For he would now see no tolerable alternative set of political and economic structures which could be brought into place to replace the structures of advanced capitalism (MacIntyre 2007: 262)

The history of the Soviet Union, MacIntyre argues, proved to be decisive to the whole Marxist movement. MacIntyre gradually reached this conclusion already during the 1960s. In one of the essays of that time MacIntyre concluded that Russia turned out to be the grave of socialism; and Khruhchev's liberalization was "parallel to the liberalization which has developed in other *capitalisms* once primitive accumulation has been accomplished" (MacIntyre 1971b: 57, emphasis added). At the same time, MacIntyre came to see Trotskyist movements in which he himself was a member as "among the most trivial of movements", parallel to "more eccentric religious sects" (ibid., 59). This treatment of the relation of the Soviet Union to the

[10] Emille Perreau-Sausine stressed the importance of emigration to the United States to the development of MacIntyre's thought: „Pourquoi MacIntyre quitte-t-il l'Europe, en 1969? Puorguoi fallait-il qu'il émigre aux États-Unis, dans la république commerciale la plus libérale? Outre-Atlantique, MacIntyre a découvert la possibilité de *ne pas être de son temps*. L'homogénéisation européenne implique une exigence impérieuse de contemporanéité. Or, à ses origines, l'Amérique fut précisément voulu comme une terre où différentes temporalités puissant coexister sans se mêler" (Perreau-Saussine 2005: 124). In the United States MacIntyre could intellectually free himself from the "exigence impérieuse de contemporanéité" and the choices it imposes and to observe modernity from distance.

relevance of Marxist politics is, of course, shared by many post-Marxists and ex-Marxist-turned-critics-of-Marxism. MacIntyre repeated these conclusions in *After Virtue* but this time with more radical implications: there is no viable political project for grand scale social transformation.

At the time of the publication of *After Virtue,* the world was still divided by the Cold War. But MacIntyre here again clearly rejects the present choice between Western capitalism and Soviet-style socialism as the only possible political horizon. One position that remained unchanged during MacIntyre's intellectual career was that he never agreed to compromise with the status quo. His moral theory provided a harsh critique of the dominant societies of the time. But this critique without a corresponding political project that would point to the possibility of creating different institutions in the end would amount to a conservative lament on the corruption of the present. *After Virtue* ended with blueprints for a new political project. It called for the rejection of modern politics and the creation of moral communities:

> What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament. We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St. Benedict (MacIntyre 2007: 263)

The hope for universal emancipation turned out to be a sort of a waiting for Godot that fails to show up. MacIntyre's proposal is to reject decisively any such waiting as illusionary, as well as to give up any hope that modern societies can be reformed through their existing political institutions. Those institutions are themselves the source of corruption. Instead, one must start constructing alternative ways of life in the here and now. MacIntyre, as commented upon in chapter 1, does not idealize the local community. He makes it clear that he advocates the construction of local communities because he sees such political trajectory as the only option still available given the failures of revolutionary movements (MacIntyre 1998a: 265).

Marxism in its classical form focused on the conquering of state power in order to use it to implement socialist reforms. In the end, through the expansion of democracy, the state would "wither away". Now MacIntyre seems to accept that anarchist critique of Marxist state politics was, in the end, correct. Examining his early Marxist assumption MacIntyre wrote:

> Among my as yet unquestioned assumptions was a belief that the only possible politics that could effectively respond to the injustices of a capitalist economic and social order was a politics

> that took for granted the institutional forms of the modern state and that had as its goal the conquest of state power, whether by electoral or by other means, so that I could not as yet recognize that those who make the conquest of state power their aim are always in the end conquered by it and, in becoming the instruments of the state, themselves become in time the instruments of one of the several versions of modern capitalism. (MacIntyre 2006g: 150)

In his Marxist period MacIntyre championed Lenin and Trotsky as symbols of a movement aiming at the conquest of power in order to implement universally the institutions of a new and more just society. Now, the new political project of communal survival is personified in the new leader – a modern version of St. Benedict – that would have to lead people away from the conquest of power (that in the end corrupts the ideals of the movement) in order to establish the communities of good life under present conditions. Thus the political trajectory defined with reference to St. Benedict amounts to defensive politics of local participatory communities:

> [...] what is most urgently needed is a politics of self-defense for all those local societies that aspire to achieve some relatively self-sufficient and independent form of participatory practice-based community and that therefore need to protect themselves from the corrosive effects of capitalism and the depredations of state power. (MacIntyre 2006g: 155)

in the essay "Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good" MacIntyre states that political communities will have to remain as much as possible isolated from the state and capital power. If they interact with the state, it should only be to secure the resources that are needed for the community, but only on the terms of community (MacIntyre 1998b: 252). In *After Virtue* MacIntyre claimed that we can only hope to survive the new Dark Ages: politics of grand-scale social transformation have failed. MacIntyre's position in *After Virtue* is thus politically pessimist. The new St. Benedict and communal movement he calls for can only hope to sustain the tradition of virtues under unfavourable conditions. It is thus hard to call such politics "Revolutionary Aristotelianism". In the next chapter I will examine some important changes of emphasis in the latest political essays of MacIntyre that point to different conception of much more active local resistances.

From the 90's onwards MacIntyre has repeatedly reconsidered the relevance of Marxism from his new standpoint of Aristotelian politics. One of the most significant re-examination of the logic of resistance to capitalism is found in the essay "The *Theses on Feuerbach*: A Road Not Taken", the first part of which was already discussed. In this essay MacIntyre asks what kind of experience provides the moral sources to resist the alienating forces of capitalism. At the

end of this essay MacIntyre refers to E. P. Thompson's work *The Making of the English Working Class* (first published in 1963), especially his depiction of the life of weaving communities. MacIntyre presents a somewhat idealised picture of these communities: "At its best the hand-loom weaver's way of life sustained his family's independence and his own self-reliance. Honesty and integrity were highly valued and what Thompson calls the 'rhythm of work and leisure' allowed the cultivation of gardens, the learning of arithmetic and geometry, the reading and the composition of poetry." To MacIntyre they exemplify the Aristotelian community of practices, virtues and the human good: "At their best they embodied in their practice a particular conception of human good, of virtues, of duties to each other and of the subordinate place of technical skill in human life, but one which they themselves had no theory to articulate" (MacIntyre 1998d: 231-232). MacIntyre argues that this communal life informed the radicalism and the resistance of hand-loom weavers to advancing capitalist relations. MacIntyre's point is that the militancy of the early proletariat came not from their class-consciousness as a proletariat, that is, as a particular class occupying a specific place in the relations of production, but from the experience of early forms of communal 'good life'. Marx, according to MacIntyre, did not understand this: Marx "seems not to have understood the form of life from which that militancy arose, and so later failed to understand that while proletarianization makes it necessary for workers to resist, it also tends to deprive workers of those forms of practice through which they can discover conceptions of a good and of virtues adequate to the moral needs of resistance" (ibid. 232).

Thompson's historical narrative is invoked by MacIntyre to argue for a different kind of politics than one practiced by Marxist working-class movements. Because of their importance in MacIntyre's political thought, we must look closer at Thompson's arguments about the working class consciousness and his description of pre-capitalist communities. Thompson analysed the category of class as something that is experienced by real people in real situations. "Class", according to Thompson, "happens when some men, as a result of common experience (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs" (Thompson 1991: 8-9). Classes exist in concrete struggles and experiences. Thompson's definition is close to MacIntyre's own position: real interests and conceptions of the good are discovered through some sort of concrete experience. In Thomson's definition, class is a meaningful concept only if it expresses the self-awareness of actual people in their historical experience: "Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition" (Thompson 1991: 10)

Thompson argues that class-consciousness was formed by many influences and experiences that precede the existence of the class itself. The formation of class-consciousness was a process that brought together people with very different ideological backgrounds: people whose consciousness was formed by their lives in communities, religious influences, many forms of earlier radicalism, etc. It was a long process by which those earlier experiences merged together, were transformed and finally formed a particular class – proletariat – with its particular political aims. Thompson aimed to discard the static model of class when class consciousness, or the objective class interest, is discovered analytically from the position in the process of production. Instead, Thomson pointed to the necessity to analyse how people actually perceived themselves:

> The making of the working class is a fact of political and cultural, as much as economic, history. It was not the spontaneous generation of the factory system. [...] The working class made itself as much as it was made. (ibid. 213)

Thompson's description of pre-capitalist communities and their resistance to capitalism presents a highly dynamic picture of changing social life in the advance of capitalism and of the new hopes and desires produced during this process of change, deprivation, and struggle. Thomson argues that we should resist idealisation of pre-capitalist forms of life but neither should we accept the bourgeois ideology of rural "idiocy" (ibid., 405). Thompson argues that the Industrial Revolution by increasing social mobility and destroying earlier ways of communal life also created "the social myth of the golden age of the village community before enclosure and before the Wars" (ibid., 254). The claim that it was a social myth does not mean it was simply false. Thompson calls this myth "a montage of memories" that puts together positive experiences of pre-capitalist existence. An important characteristic of this myth is that it was not perpetuated by those who stayed in village communities but by the city workers: "Faced with the hard times and unemployment in the brick wastes of the growing town, the memories of lost rights rose up with a new bitterness of deprivation" (ibid., 256). This myth emphasised the virtues of communal life when one had some control over one's work and leisure rhythm; a life where one had several sources of provisions when, for example, hand loom weavers worked their gardens or fields to avoid absolute dependence on the production for market; as well as the experience of moral community where the rules of justice arose from human needs. These communal experiences made different workers, especially weavers, susceptible to early utopian socialist ideas and projects (Thompson 1991: 322-326).

It would be a mistake to reject this early resistance as reactionary and as a form of nostalgia for the past that cannot inform progressive politics. The case of Luddism in Thompson's account is very illuminating. Luddism, argues Thompson, was a more complicated and nuanced phenomenon that just an angry reactionary destruction of machines. Thompson reveals how Luddist radicalism was informed by the image of the golden days. But this image played a progressive role as it allowed the radicals to project hopes for rationally and collectively controlled industrialization that would benefit the community instead of destroying it and impoverishing the working classes:

> On the one hand, it looked backward to old customs and paternalist legislation which could never be revived; on the other hand, it tried to revive ancient rights in order to establish new precedents. At different times their demands included a legal minimum wage; the control of the 'sweating' of women or juveniles; arbitration; the engagement by the masters to find work for skilled men made redundant by machinery; the prohibition of shoddy work; the right to open trade union combination. All these demands looked forwards, as much as backwards; and they contained within them a shadowy image, not so much of a paternalist, but of a democratic community, in which industrial growth should be regulated according to ethical priorities and the pursuit of profit by subordinated to human needs. (Thompson 1991: 603)

The moral source of resistance and the image of "the golden age" were produced exactly at the moment when the old ways of life were being destroyed by the march of the Industrial Revolution. It was a desire for 'moral economy' that could not be systematically articulated by those early radicals, but which nevertheless was the source of their radicalism. The resistance created by this process was not strictly economical: it was a demand for a way of life, an economy immersed in the needs of community and the idea of a good life. It was not a demand just for higher wages: "The issues which provoked the most intensity of feeling were very often ones in which such values as traditional customs, 'justice', 'independence', security, or family-economy were at stake, rather than straightforward 'bread-and-butter' issues" (ibid., 222). To the bourgeois vocabulary of political economy, consisting of supply and demand and the ideology of the unrestrained market, those early radicals opposed the moral vocabulary of justice, dignity, independence, and way of life. MacIntyre in a more recent essay argued that any successful resistance to capitalism must start by describing the system in moral terms: "at key points the system can be successfully resisted and even changed. And a first condition for it being so resisted, of knowing when and how to resist it, is that its workings are understood in moral terms" (MacIntyre 2015: 17). Thompson's account of the formation of working class radicalism illustrates this process of moral resistance.

At one point in his argument Thompson points out that his description of workers' struggles against dehumanising conditions of the emerging capitalist order reflects the other side of the world of Jane Austen's novels (Thompson 1991: 231). Jane Austen is also invoked by MacIntyre in *After Virtue*. MacIntyre contrasts Jane Austen with William Cobbett. While Cobbett "crusaded to change the society as a whole", Austen "tried to discover enclaves for the life of the virtues within it" (MacIntyre 2007: 238). But Cobbett is Thompson's hero, not MacIntyre's in *After Virtue*. In this regard, *After Virtue* is a politically pessimistic book. MacIntyre's later return to the question of Marxism and the sources of resistance mark a significant change in the neo-Aristotelian political thought.

But Thompson and MacIntyre part ways in their approach to the question of resistance to capitalism. Thompson's main argument is that the process of proletarianisation brought together distinct groups and moulded them into a new social class, namely, proletariat. This process forced the various and fragmented groups to overcome their particularities and posit themselves as the working class with the universal interest. The new working class developed its political goals that aimed no longer at localized resistance to capitalist development but to global change to overcome capitalist exploitation. The scattered resistance in terms of moral myth of the good old ways was replaced by an organised political movement with clear objectives. MacIntyre argues that the same process that uprooted the workers from their communities also eventually deprived them of the moral sources of resistance.

Compared with MacIntyre's position in his early works we can see the essential change of emphasis. In those works MacIntyre linked desire and history to argue that the contradictions in capitalism create the desire for emancipation. Now MacIntyre argues that capitalism and labour union politics domesticated the workers thus depriving them from the necessary moral resources for resistance. Paradoxically, MacIntyre came much closer to the pessimistic tones of *One Dimensional Man* that he once so emphatically rejected.

In the essay "Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Need To Be", written as a response to his critics, MacIntyre sums up the reasons of his distancing from Marxist politics in the following:

> one cannot be a Marxist – as against recognizing certain key truths in Marxism – unless one is able to identify a class that is potentially revolutionary a*nd* a form of organization that is capable of giving leadership to that class *and* a type of relationship between such an organization and such a class that could issue in a self-governing grass-roots participatory democracy (MacIntyre 2011b: 330)

MacIntyre does not deny that contemporary societies are marked by class conflict. Only his account of moral agency is no longer connected with the particular class position. MacIntyre refuses to identify emancipatory struggles with a particular social class and argues that the conception of "a single collective subject with a universal interest" is just "bad metaphysics" (ibid., 320). What it required is no longer class politics, but various collective projects aimed at realising the individual and common goods. As to his early arguments for the Leninist type of revolutionary party, MacIntyre now accepts that it also failed to realise the hopes that were attached to it. Even though MacIntyre still has very positive views on Lenin, he now argues that the idea of democratic centralism was doomed to fail. Such a party was never able to create a constant flow of information between the centre and the periphery and between different points of the periphery, so in the end it could not at the same time both express and direct the interests of the working classes but reproduced a duality between experts that claim to know the "true" interests of the masses and the masses that live under false consciousness (ibid., 321).

In *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* MacIntyre acknowledges that the neo-Aristotelian politics that he envisions is closer to distributism than Marxism. The difference between distributism and Marxism, according to MacIntyre, is twofold. The first has to do with the question of state power. The traditional view of Marxist politics was that in order to accomplish the transition from capitalism to socialism (and communism) the concentration of political and economic power was required to be in the hands of the revolutionary party. This power, by achieving its aims, would gradually dissolve itself. But the distributists argue that the most important thing is "a series of genuinely local political initiatives through which the possibilities of a grassroots distribution and sharing of power and property could be achieved" (MacIntyre 2016: 108). But the concentration of power that Marxist demanded in reality tends to destroy all those initiatives. Another difference is that distributism is not based on class perspective. The Marxist political project depended on the emergence of a revolutionary working class. Distributists argue that the change in the social and economic order is not in the interest of one class, but in the human interest, thus "needed changes can come from several quarters" (ibid.). This comment by MacIntyre somewhat distorts Marxism by ignoring that Marxist focus on the working class politics was in fact a way to unite the particular and the universal: workers' emancipation is perceived in Marxism as essential for universal liberation and this allowed for an alliance between different oppressed groups and intellectuals. Thus the overthrow of capitalism is not in the interest of one class, as MacIntyre is claiming to be characteristic of Marxism, but in the universal human interest.

To sum up our analysis of MacIntyre's endorsement and eventual rejection of Marxist politics: MacIntyre started with Marxist optimism regarding working-class emancipation and

soon accepted Leninist conception of the vanguard party; MacIntyre's gradually lost his hopes of the proletarian revolution and acknowledged that the working-classes are increasingly domesticated under welfare capitalism; during the new revolutionary upheavals of late 1960's MacIntyre already distanced himself from Marxist politics although still kept his hopes for emancipation. MacIntyre's mature work comes as a result of the perceived failure of Marxist tradition and is propelled by a desire to re-examine the failed project of human liberation. Accepting both the failure of the Marxist project and the victory of capitalism, MacIntyre asks what moral resources for resistance we still have. It is clear that MacIntyre now accepts that there is no privileged actor in the historical drama of emancipation. MacIntyre moved from the idea that the proletarian class-position makes them capable to realise the humanist society towards the Aristotelian notion of plurality of practices and their internal goods. So neo-Aristotelian politics is no longer class politics, but politics that involves "making and sustaining institutions that provide for those practices through which common goods are achieved, practices of families, workplaces, schools, clinics, theatres, sports, institutions that characteristically, although not always, take the form of cooperative enterprises" (MacIntyre 2016: 110). The next chapter discusses the central aspects of such politics in greater detail.

5. COMMUNITY, COMMON GOOD AND UTOPIA

5.1. Politics of shared deliberation

MacIntyre has not dismissed radical democratic ideals with the turn from Marxist politics towards neo-Aristotelian politics of localised resistances. This chapter asks how these emancipatory ideals are reformulated in the framework of local politics.

MacIntyre has provided a sketch of the flourishing political community in *Dependent Rational Animals*. One of the central requirements for such a community is that it should organize its political life in terms of politics as shared deliberation. MacIntyre envisages an egalitarian community where every member participates in the process of collective decision-making regarding matters that are important for the community as a whole. There must be "institutionalized forms of deliberation to which all those members of the community who have proposals, objections and arguments to contribute have access". This process should be organized in such a way that "both deliberation and decisions are recognizable as the work of the whole" (MacIntyre 1999: 129). It must be noted that MacIntyre is not directly proposing to create some radical democratic body, say, an assembly of all the members of community. His formulation remains elusive enough, but there is nothing to suggest that such an institution of direct democracy is not compatible with MacIntyre's ideal of the flourishing political community.

Neo-Aristotelian community embodies in its everyday life a certain type of political activity. Politics is there understood, to use Mark C. Murphy's expression, to be a second-order practice (Murphy 2003: 163), or "the master art" to use Aristotle's phrase: a practice whose goal is to integrate through shared deliberation the variety of practices undertaken and the goods realised into a shared vision of the good life for the individual and the community as a whole. Politics is thus "a type of practice through which other types of practice are ordered, so that individuals may direct themselves towards what is best for them and for the community" (MacIntyre 1998b: 241). Here we need to recall the analysis of the *polis* in Chapter 2. Political community sustains various practices and different goods that those practices realise. This plurality of practices and goods raises the problem of which goods should take priority over others, how recourses should be allocated and achievements rewarded. Such problems are raised and solutions are looked for through the practice of politics as shared deliberation.

The essential feature of such political activity is that it is not compartmentalised and specialised as an activity of experts. On the contrary, political deliberation is the expression of the practical rationality of ordinary people. MacIntyre's Aristotelian account of the political

rationality expressed in local politics could be described with Hunt's term "democracy without professionals" discussed in Chapter 3:

> Indeed politics will be that practical activity which affords the best opportunity for the exercise of our rational powers, an opportunity afforded only by political societies to whose decision-making widely shared rational deliberation is central, societies which extend practical rationality from the farm and the fishing fleet, the household and the craft workplace, to its political assemblies. (MacIntyre 1998b: 243)

Thus politics of shared deliberation is based not on any special knowledge but it is a form of practical rationality employed in various activities. The practice of politics is not only necessary for the cultivation of practical rationality but it also plays essential part in the process of learning what the common and individual goods are and how they are related. The actions of an Aristotelian practical agent, conceived by MacIntyre, are informed by an understanding of the goods of his life and the common goods of the wider community. Indeed, the individual goods are related to the common goods and are achieved by also achieving the common goods. The connection between individual and common goods is not established by some theoretical reflection but by the practice of collective deliberation about the nature of those goods. The Aristotelian practical agency is possible only under a specific social setting:

> But we must not picture this connection between individual goods and the common good as something that might exist apart from and independently of the rational activity of the members of that society in enquiring and arguing about the nature of their goods. For it is a connection constituted by practically rational activity. (ibid.: 242)

Such enquiry and arguments about the nature of goods are always collective. These comments make it clear why Jeffery Nicholas reading of MacIntyre's account of the good that links the notion of the good with the rationality of traditions is insufficient. It is only in the context of rational deliberative community that such rationality is exhibited. The questions of individual goods, common goods and the good life in general are always practical questions of various political communities. Practical rationality, conceptualised by MacIntyre, presuppose a community that organises its political life in such a way that shared political deliberation becomes a common feature of the everyday life of community. This is what makes the *polis*, on which MacIntyre's account of a flourishing political community is based, a distinct and unique political form: "A *polis* is always, potentially or actually, a society of rational enquiry, of self-scrutiny" (MacIntyre 1998b: 241). Thus, while MacIntyre is arguing that the *polis* requires some

sort of shared culture, it is, first of all, a culture of shared collective learning and questioning: "Our primary shared and common good is found in that activity of communal learning through which we together became able to order goods, both in our individual lives and in the political society" (ibid., 243).

It is evident how much political deliberation at the community-level differs from political life of modern states. The *polis*, a small scale community, presupposes that individuals participating in shared deliberations are not complete strangers. This kind of politics assumes at least some familiarity between those who engage in the process of deliberation. The political life of modern states, on the contrary, involves distant bureaucratic structures and a distinct class of professional politicians. Locality is necessary, argues MacIntyre, "so that individuals cannot avoid being judged for what they are". It allows for the political virtue of integrity to be cultivated among the participants of shared political life (ibid., 249). Integrity is rarely a virtue of professional politicians of contemporary societies.

Neo-Aristotelian political theory describes an egalitarian democratic community where every voice matters. The argument for egalitarianism is essential here. But for MacIntyre it is not economic egalitarianism that matters the most (that does not mean that economic inequalities do not matter, as we shall see below), but equality in developing and using one's rational powers. MacIntyre argues that every oppressive power relies on educational oppression, denying the oppressed the opportunity to learn and develop their rational powers, and usually labelling them as naturally incapable of the same rationality as their rulers (MacIntyre 1998b: 250). This is the circular logic of any form of oppression: "domination of a certain kind is in fact the cause of those characteristics of the dominated which are then invoked to justify unjustified domination" (MacIntyre 1988: 105). Thus, even though MacIntyre remains a radical critic of Enlightenment he acknowledges the importance of Enlightenment's critique of power and oppression (see especially Macintyre 2006f: 180).

MacIntyre's account of shared deliberation resonates with Jacques Rancière's theme of the political difference between *logos* and *phōnē* (Rancière 1998). To possess *logos* is to be a rational animal capable of political deliberation. But, argues Rancière, the institution of the political community is founded on the distinction as to who possesses *logos*. Those designated as incapable of *logos* and as having merely a voice (*phōnē*) that allows them to express emotion (pain or pleasure) but not to engage in rational speech are left outside the life of the *polis*. Without *logos*, a slave, a woman, or a barbarian, is not a political animal. To deny *logos* is thus the most basic form of oppression. Those without *logos* can only be governed; to reason with them is impossible because they do not speak. MacIntyre's own work expresses this egalitarian sensitivity by arguing that the voice of every member of the community must be acknowledged

and takes a step towards even a more radical claim. MacIntyre imagines a community whose "political structures must make it possible both for those capable of independent practical reason and for those whose exercise of reasoning is limited or nonexistent to have a voice in communal deliberation" (MacIntyre 1999: 130). For this to be possible, the virtues of friendship and the role of proxies must be given due importance. To focus only on the role of reason and language in political deliberation may leave those whose powers of reasoning are limited or nonexistent excluded from the deliberative community. Someone else must speak for the voiceless so their needs can be adequately acknowledged. However, to successfully do so, the relationship between the one whose powers of reasoning is limited and the one who speaks for her/him must be informed and sustained by adequate virtues, so that those who are dependent are not treated as subjects of compassion but as fellow participants in the same political structures of common goods.

At this point it is necessary to address the criticism of Mark C. Murphy who argued that MacIntyre's conception of politics of local community is deeply incoherent (Murphy 2003). Murphy focuses on MacIntyre's claim that politics of should be understood as another form of practice. Murphy's objection can be summarised as follows. Practices, according to MacIntyre's formulation, have their own internal goods. Only by participating in the practice can an individual gradually learn what those internal goods are and to appreciate them. From these premises Murphy reaches the conclusion that "goods internal to practice cannot be adequately known by outsiders". If this is so, then MacIntyre's notion of politics as a second-order practice concerned with the ordering of other practices within a community cannot be sustained and "is bound to be a chimera". The reason for this is that the deliberators taking part in politics as a practice must have an adequate appreciation of the different goods pursued by the members of their community and "no political deliberator could have all the knowledge required". No one can take part sufficiently in all different practices in order to judge their relative merits adequately. There are simply too many practices and it would require too much time to learn to appreciate them all (Murphy 2003: 173-174). It seems that Murphy is claiming that MacIntyre is guilty of the same impossible utopianism as that expressed in Marx's characterisation of communism as such a society where every person would be capable to engage in all different human activities and the differentiation and specialisation of labour would simply disappear.

Murphy acknowledges that one can object to his criticism by pointing out that the political deliberation MacIntyre is talking about is not individual but collective, public, activity. So even though a single deliberator may lack the necessary rational powers to determine which practices should be given priority over others, this can be remedied by other deliberators with whom one engages in shared deliberation. The reasoning powers of community as collective

reasoner are much higher that the reasoning powers of a single individual. But Murphy rejects the relevance of this objection by arguing that the knowledge required in politics as practice is the comparative knowledge of the relative importance of different practices. So if one person has an intimate knowledge of one practice, and another person of another practice, those practices still cannot be compared because "a participant in one practice will not be able adequately to convey the importance of the goods of his or her practice just through talking about it" (Murphy 2003: 174). Thus Murphy's objection is based on the assumption that only those practices can be compared that are mastered by all the deliberators.

But one can object to Murphy's criticism with several points. First of all, the shared deliberation about practices and their value to the larger community does not happen among individuals that have no prior knowledge of other practices other than their own, as if under the veil of ignorance. We should not think about MacIntyre's notion of shared deliberation in liberal terms of some sort of social contract. Different practices already exist in the life of a community and they are already historically prioritised in one way or another. So the participants of shared deliberation already have some knowledge about different practices and their place in the life of the community. So there always already is some state of affairs that one questions and deliberates about. And one does not need to engage in some particular activity to understand that it has importance for the community. For example, I do not need to become a poet myself to understand that poetry brings important goods. Another argument against Murphy's objection would be that he seems to read MacIntyre's arguments about ordering of different goods as implying some sort of a list where every practice has its clearly defined position of importance in relation to other practices. But it should not be read this way. MacIntyre is arguing that the importance of various practices must be acknowledged by the community in light of some broader vision of the good life. This of course implies evaluating and prioritising one practice over another, thus some sort of rank-ordering. But this ordering is the continuous activity of politics as shared deliberation and it can always be questioned, reassessed, and reordered. There is no final "list" and every ordering will always be imperfect and open to further criticism. This ordering is always historical and is related to the particular challenges that the community is facing, so one time it may decide to prioritize one practice at the expense of the others, and to change the ordering after some time when, say, the material conditions of the community change. What matters is not some final decision about the relative importance of various practices – if this final list would be possible then politics of shared deliberation would be unnecessary – but the institutional space where questions could be raised and people could deliberate collectively about the goals of their political community. Imperfect knowledge and

disagreement are essential parts of such deliberation, but they don't make the deliberation futile, as Murphy seems to suggest.

This brings us to the question of disagreement and conflict. MacIntyre argues that his ideal community will have some shared vision of the good life. Does that presuppose the suppression of dissent and does that mean that such a community would necessarily be oppressive? And does not MacIntyre significantly underestimate the role of conflict in contemporary political societies? The answers to both questions should be negative. The vision of good life is political, the result of collective self-questioning and critique, so it already presupposes the possibility of radical disagreement. Dissent always remains a possibility and the political life of the community must find a proper way to integrate dissent as necessary for continuous self-examination but in such a way as not to destroy the shared political life of community:

> What will be important to such a society, if it holds the kind of view of the human good and the common good that I have outlined, will be to ask what can be learned from such dissenters. It will therefore be crucial not only to tolerate dissent, but to enter into rational conversation with it and to cultivate as a political virtue not merely a passive tolerance, but an active and enquiring attitude towards radically dissenting views, a virtue notably absent from the dominant politics of the present. (MacIntyre 1998b: 251)

This was the essential paradox of the *polis*: it incorporated the plurality of voices and radical self-questioning by providing a space where disagreement could appear without destroying the *polis* itself. On the other hand, the possibility that dissent would become so strong that it could destroy the *polis* always remains. Both Aristotle and Marx understood how economic inequalities play a significant, if not the most significant, role in precluding rational agreement. MacIntyre is envisaging a political community that aims to achieve rational agreement on the nature of various individual and common goods and how they should be ordered while at the same time remaining open to disagreement. It places high moral demands on those who participate in the shared deliberation. But what is important is that disagreement appears as an element of a shared practice that aims to reach agreement. Under the institutionalised forms of contemporary liberal politics, different standpoints appear as competing particularistic interests and usually the one with the better financial backing wins. MacIntyre attempts to conceptualise a political space were different views could be debated rationally.

MacIntyre argues that one should approach disagreement as an opportunity to learn from critics but he immediately adds that one should not imagine that it is possible to treat any disagreement as such an opportunity (MacIntyre 2016: 219). One thing is the disagreement with one's colleagues in various practices, institutions, and in political deliberation, that is disagreement in the shared pursuit of the common good. Such disagreement, when supported by virtues, can lead to a better understanding of the nature of the common goods and the good life in general. But there can be no such productive disagreement with the economic and political elites of contemporary neo-liberal societies. MacIntyre is pointing out that neo-liberalism has created such radical economic inequalities that "those with the most power and money have been able to immunize themselves from risk, while by their decisions and actions exposing the weakest and most vulnerable to risk and making them to pay the cost, when those decisions and actions go astray" (ibid: 220). Such elites have put themselves in a position where the pursuit of their interests results in the destruction of the common good. Disagreement with them, argues MacIntyre, "is and should be pursued as a prologue to prolonged social conflict" (ibid.). Such comments reveal again that MacIntyre's account of virtues should be read in the context of contemporary social conflicts and that this account involves radical political implications.

Thus the element of disagreement has a double role in MacIntyre's account: disagreement with the political and economic elites and the disagreement as the element within the rational Aristotelian community. The latter requires openness to dissent and the ability to learn from one's opponents. That it is very difficult in reality and puts a lot of moral demands on the participants in the rational *polis* hardly needs elaborating. But the central element of MacIntyre's account is that such communities are places of collective learning. And part of moral learning is learning to speak with one's independent voice as well as learning from the voices of others. Communities sustaining such rational self-questioning have their own histories, and part of these histories is the history of dissent and disagreement and their resolutions.

From what has been discussed, it is clear how MacIntyre's account of political deliberation differs from Habermas' communicative rationality. While Habermas focuses on the formal reason where deliberation is the matter of the best argument, MacIntyre's shared deliberation is always historically and culturally situated; it is an element of actual community. Another, and the most important difference, is that practical rationality is inseparable from the development of virtues. MacIntyre's account of practical rationality is Aristotelian: central to Aristotle's account of practical reasoning is that such reasoning would go astray without relevant moral virtues. MacIntyre is not optimistic about the formal reason, given his rejection of Enlightenment: "argument by itself, even sound argument, is ineffective upon those who have not had the kind of experiences from which they can learn" (MacIntyre 2011a: 15). It is the

shared experiences of those who participate in the construction and sustenance of the political community of the common good that inform the force of the arguments in their political deliberations.

5.2. Community and the state

MacIntyre's turn to the politics of local community is combined with the rejection of state and party politics. The essential criticism of the state is the following: Only in the context of the local can the politics of common good be possible. Anyone engaged in constructing the political structures of common good must break with the established status quo of state politics. Conventional politics are simply serve to sustain the established power inequalities and exclude any political alternatives from consideration. Such alternatives could only spring from grass roots initiatives that aim to create and sustain institutions serving the common good.

MacIntyre's rejection of the state is categorical. His account of the common good presupposes the politics of shared deliberation to enquire into the nature of what the common good entails. Such politics are not a special activity reserved for experts, but are, or should be, an expression of the rational powers of plain persons. The modern state is not an Aristotelian community of self-scrutiny. The institutional forms of state politics do not sustain shared deliberation that aims to reach a common mind and shared sense of purpose:

> What is lacking in modern political societies is any type of institutional arena in which plain persons – neither engaged in academic pursuits nor professionals of the political life – are able to engage together in systematic reasoned debate, designed to arrive at a rationally well-founded common mind in how to answer questions about the relationship of politics to the claims of rival and alternative ways of life, each with its own conception of the virtues and of the common good. (MacIntyre 1998b: 239)

MacIntyre sees state politics as essentially biased towards the established power relations and thus totally alien to any politics that aim at societal change. Even though the citizens can vote to choose from alternative political parties, these alternatives, in the end, are fake alternatives: "Voters in liberal democracies are in some sense free to vote for whom and what they choose, but their votes will not be effective unless they are cast for one of the alternatives defined for them by the political elites" (ibid: 236). Institutionalised politics do not allow real alternatives to emerge. The political life of modern societies, as depicted by MacIntyre, is very bleak. State bureaucracies manipulate society for their own interests, while citizens play the illusory game of democracy: they can choose from time to time from some alternatives that are

formulated by the established political elites. The alternatives thus proposed are always limited as they reflect only the interest of an elite minority: "the most fundamental issues are excluded from that range of alternatives" (ibid).

The state is increasingly integrated into the capitalist order, to the extent that the political and economic elites merge: "Politically the societies of advanced Western modernity are oligarchies disguised as liberal democracies" (MacIntyre 1998b: 237). Thus state politics in the end serve the interests of capital. And, because it is state power that is the source of law in modern societies, our ultimate law giver is "state-and-the-market" (MacIntyre 2011a: 14). MacIntyre never rejected Marxist insights into the nature of power and law under capitalism. It was Marx's insistence that the state under class societies is inevitably bound to the interests of the economically dominant class.

MacIntyre, it seems, is not using some particular theory of the state, at least it would be hard to discover a comprehensive theory of the state in MacIntyre's work. There is much influence of Weber's characterisation of bureaucratic efficiency, as well as both parasitic and class state theories, as analysed in Chapter 3. The modern state is parasitic on the genuine common good; and state power usually serves the interest of the wealthy. On the other hand, MacIntyre doesn't see the state as an integrated set of institutions that are unified for some definitive purpose. The modern state, while increasingly bound with the interests of capital, is also quite chaotic and contradictory:

> The modern state is a large, complex and often ramshackle set of interlocking institutions, combining none too coherently the ethos of a public utility company with inflated claims to embody ideals of liberty and justice (MacIntyre 1998b: 236)

Because of the institutional character of the modern state, any attempt to impose a substantive vision of the human good to justify state politics is very dangerous:

> For the contemporary state could not adopt a point of view on the human good as its own without to a significant degree distorting, degrading and discrediting that point of view. It would put those values to the service of its own political and economic power and so degrade and discredit them (MacIntyre 2006h: 214)

The state lacks exactly that arena where people could reach a rational decision regarding various alternative political choices. Lacking such an arena, any vision of the human good that the state adopts is not reached through the shared deliberation of all. It could only be imposed by those in power and serve as an ideology to mask the interest of the elites. Thus liberals are

correct to urge us to resist any attempt to connect the state with some vision of a good life. And even though, in the end, even the liberal the state is not neutral between visions of the good, and it is necessary to sustain the illusion of this neutrality (ibid.). It is the illusion that protects from the danger of totalitarian power arising when the modern state adopts a particular view of the human good.

Neo-Aristotelian politics presuppose that the bonds between individuals are rational and forged by shared deliberation in the participatory, practice-based, political community. This also implies an important criticism of nationalism, as an attempt of modern states to impose a unity on its citizens. It is an appeal to human bonds that are essentially pre-rational, or nonrational: "The philosophers of the *Volk* are Herder and Heidegger, not Aristotle" (MacIntyre 1998b: 242). National unity is a simulated unity imposed by state institutions; it is not the rational political ties that MacIntyre is describing.

MacIntyre's critique of patriotism is illuminating. The modern nation state, in extreme circumstances, may call its citizens to die for it. Usually this is motivated by an appeal to patriotism as a political virtue. Patriotism indeed is a political virtue, MacIntyre agrees. But given the criticism he advanced regarding the nature of the state and its (non)relation to the common good, the notion of patriotism is deeply problematic. The virtue of patriotism calls one to defend, even to the point of death, the common political good that defines one's life. But if the relation of the common good to the state is what MacIntyre claims it to be, then the state's appeal to patriotic feelings cannot but be ideological. The state simply is not the community that provides such a relationship between the individual and the common good as in MacIntyre's small scale participatory community. MacIntyre goes as far as to claim that to be called to defend the modern state with one's life "is like being asked to die for the telephone company" (MacIntyre 2006d: 163; also MacIntyre 1994: 303).

MacIntyre is not, of course, claiming that it is necessary to reject anything that the state does or that the state can never provide anything useful. On the contrary: the state can provide security, redistribute money to fund and provide necessary social services, etc. All the public goods that the state provides are crucial and must be defended. But the central claim of Revolutionary Aristotelianism is that state politics should not be confused with the genuine politics of the common good. MacIntyre is making a distinction between the public goods, provided by the state, and the common good embodied in the community. The passage below sums up MacIntyre's position regarding the relationship between the state and community, and between the public goods and common good:

> the shared public goods of the modern nation-state are not the common goods of a genuine nation-wide community and, when the nation-state masquerades as the guardian of such a common good, the outcome is bound to be either ludicrous or disastrous or both. For the counterpart to the nation-state thus misconceived as itself a community is a misconception of its citizens as constituting a *Volk*, a type of collectivity whose bonds are simultaneously to extend to the entire body of citizens and yet to be as binding as the ties of kinship and locality. In a modern, large scale nation-state no such collectivity is possible and the pretence that it is is always an ideological disguise for sinister realities. I conclude then that insofar as the nation-state provides necessary and important public goods, these must not be confused with the type of common good for which communal recognition is required by the virtues of acknowledged dependence, and that insofar as the rhetoric of the nation-state presents it as the provider of something that is indeed, in this stronger sense, a common good, that rhetoric is a purveyor of dangerous fictions. (MacIntyre 1999: 132-133)

MacIntyre is thus not advocating that the politics of local communities should be pursued without any relation to the state. At the same time it is necessary to resist the possible co-option of community leaders by the bureaucracy of the state that would make community politics only an extension of state activity. MacIntyre insists on this point that any genuine politics of the common good must reject the institutions of the state as a matter of principle. The danger of co-option must always be remembered. MacIntyre is thus maintaining a radical left critique of state power. It is clear from his more recent restatement of the problems encountered by worker struggles. Capitalism creates a need for the workers to protest and resist. This resistance to the power of capital is institutionalised by creating unions aimed at securing the interest of workers and advancing their well-being. At the same time, capitalism, in order to continue its uninterrupted functioning, tends to co-opt and domesticate those same institutions. So a further resistance is needed to safeguard the workers' movement from the dangers of domestication. Those engaged in this resistance, argues MacIntyre, "have to recognize the agencies of the state as among those which they should treat with the greatest suspicion and indeed more than suspicion" (MacIntyre 2011b: 316). These claims, now articulated from the standpoint of Aristotelian politics, repeats the radical revolutionary position in the famous Marxist reform or revolution debate: that any attempt to use state power for social transformation ends up domesticating revolutionary agents and reproducing the same institutions they originally intended to change (see also MacIntyre 2006g: 153).

One could argue that MacIntyre's critique of the state is a weaker aspect of Revolutionary Aristotelianism. MacIntyre, it seems, understands state power as an inescapable evil of modern politics that one must confront but always keep a safe distance from. The

possibility that state institutions could be reformed and their power redistributed more equally between various local political organisations so that the big state institution would help to secure the needs of various local political organisations instead of destroying them is not envisaged by MacIntyre. But the increasing destructiveness of neoliberalism makes MacIntyre's position highly problematic. As neoliberalism attacks government spending and diminishes public services and social programs provided by the state it becomes imperative to fight for those state-provided goods. Ignoring state politics means leaving those in power to continue policies that are destructive for the communal projects called for by MacIntyre.

The distinction between public goods and common goods can also be questioned. For example, are education and healthcare common or public goods? MacIntyre is not providing a clear analytical distinction between the two types of goods. Thus, while education and healthcare are provided by the state institutions, they are also necessary for communal projects. And it is better if they are provided by the state – it can be at least in theory democratically controlled – than it is to transfer them to the private sector. MacIntyre addresses his criticism mostly to the state and it appears that the state is conceived as the main enemy of the Aristotelian politics of the common good. But it is not so much the state itself that is problematic, but the neo-liberal privatisation of the public sector, that transfers various public goods to the hands of private enterprises, subjugating those goods for the pursuit of the profit and creating many barriers for the citizens to receive these very important goods.

MacIntyre is claiming that the relation between community and the state can only be one of conflict. Emancipatory trajectory envisaged in the neo-Aristotelian theory rests on those initiatives that spring not from state actors, but from grass-roots movements. MacIntyre articulates the need for grassroots movements to create alternative institutions here and now, breaking with established political practice. Any real alternatives to the existing state-power regime must spring up from the bottom, from the initiative of those who fight for the common good:

> Only, I believe, by the experience of recurrently trying to make and remake the badly needed institutions of everyday life through grass-roots organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, small businesses that serve neighbourhood needs, schools, clinics, transport systems, and the like, so that they serve the common good, and, by doing so, learning that only by breaking with the political norms of the status quo can the relevant common goods be achieved. (MacIntyre 2011b: 320)

MacIntyre is articulating the need for active politics, politics of an everyday fight by communities to achieve the common good. Established political activity is passive: there is no process of rational articulation of real interests, only the casting of the vote to choose from a highly impoverished set of alternatives. Political disappointment and passivity, on one hand, is coupled with violent protest, on the other. Passivity and protest are two sides of the coin of political life of the ordinary under modern state politics. MacIntyre is arguing for democratic resistance on the local level and various collective projects for the common good that would allow people to articulate their common needs and build new social relations based on individual and common goods.

5.3. Community and capital

The politics of the common good presupposes a broad agreement among the people on how their common life should be structured. What such politics must acknowledge is that the inequalities generated by capitalism destroy the possibility of such agreement. Capitalist societies are class societies with radically incommensurable interests. Aristotle understood well that growing inequality is a threat to the unity of the *polis*. MacIntyre's conclusion is the same: "For gross inequality of income or wealth is by itself always liable to generate conflicts of interest and to obscure the possibility of understanding one's social relationships in terms of a common good" (MacIntye 1999: 144); "a precondition for a rational polity is a radical reduction of inequality" (MacIntyre 2011a: 14).

Not only the level of economic inequalities generated by capitalism but capitalism mode of production itself destroys the possibility of rational polity of common good. As already commented in Chapter 3, Revolutionary Aristotelianism also acknowledges Marxist critique of alienation and exploitation. Capitalism changes the nature of work in such a way that it no longer can be understood as contributing to some common good. Those who work approach their work in a utilitarian manner as a source of external resources and not as a meaningful activity in itself. Capitalism exploits the workers and, as MacIntyre repeatedly acknowledged, no level of increased standards of living could alter the injustice of exploitation (MacIntyre 2006g: 148).

The individualist and competitive nature of a market economy tends to destroy exactly those virtues that are needed to sustain a flourishing community. One of the central questions that Aristotelianism asks is the nature of our desires and their development. To be a practical agent is to be able to rationally scrutinise one's desires, to find which desires and when should be satisfied so as to live a flourishing life. But market relationships are inimical to the

development of practical rationality because they tend to manipulate desires in order to satisfy the needs of economy:

> But we inhabit a social order in which a will to satisfy those desires that will enable the economy to work as effectively as possible has became central to our way of life, a way of life for which it is crucial that human beings desire what the economy needs them to desire. What the economy needs is that people should become responsive to its needs rather to their own, and so it presents to them as overridingly desirable those goals of consumption and goals of ambition, pursuit of which will serve the economy's purposes. Desire to achieve these goals, when they become central to our lives and to our self-evaluations, prevent us from becoming self-critical about our desires and so prevent the asking of Aristotelian questions about character and desire. (MacIntyre 2011a: 13)

Thus the question of the alternative organisation of economic relations remains essential for Revolutionary Aristotelianism. First of all, the above quote does not mean that MacIntyre argues for the total abandonment of market relations. Rather, he is employing Karl Polanyi's notion of embedded economy (Polanyi 1957). Polanyi argued that economic relations in human history are always embedded into wider social relations, but capitalist society disembedded economy by making it an independent and socially dominating sphere of activity and as a result unleashed socially destructive powers of economic greed. According to MacIntyre:

> Market relationships can only be sustained by being embedded in certain types of local nonmarket relationship, relationships of uncalculated giving and receiving, if they are to contribute to overall flourishing, rather than, as they so often in fact do, undermine and corrupt communal ties. (MacIntyre 1999: 117)

Under capitalism market relations are always imposed: either you behave according to the rules of the market or you starve. Neither workers nor small producers choose market relations (MacIntyre 2006g: 147). But there is a strong and worrying element in pre-capitalist romanticism in MacIntyre's thinking about economy and the common good. He argues that:

> Genuine free markets are always local and small-scale markets in whose exchanges producers can choose to participate or not. And societies with genuinely free markets will be societies of small producers – the family farm is very much at home in such societies – in which no one is denied the possibility of the kind of productive work without which they cannot take their place in those relationships through which the common good is realized. (MacIntyre 1998b: 249-250)

But Aristotelian politics can be saved from such romanticism, even though MacIntyre himself remains reluctant to engage in the question as to what economic institutions would best suit his Aristotelian politics. Thus when Alex Callinicos confronted MacIntyre with the question about economic democracy (Callinicos 2011), MacIntyre remained reluctant to associate himself with this, or any other, political project of concrete alternative institutions claiming that he couldn't give a blueprint of some better institutional order (MacIntyre 2011b).

But we should not accept MacIntyre's answer as final. Actual experiments of economic democracy should be considered seriously from the Revolutionary Aristotelian standpoint. Struggles against capitalist destructiveness often result in attempts to democratically control economic enterprises by workers themselves. Those involved in these struggles ask the Aristotelian questions of how economic activity should be organised so that it would serve the needs of community without becoming a destructive force. Experiments in economic democracy usually include not only the democratic decision-making in the enterprises, but also aim to make the enterprises responsive to the needs of the wider community, extending the process of shared deliberation from the firm to the local neighbourhood, where not only the workers but other members of community can participate in shared decision-making. Such shared decision-making involves questions as how should the revenues be divided between workers' salaries and investments, but also what part of them should be given to satisfy the most pressing needs of the wider community, so that the community as a whole could flourish. This process of deliberation extends from the factory to the neighbourhood, and then on to the community at large.

In *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* MacIntyre accepted cooperative movements as an example of the struggles for economic relations that would benefit the community. He gives two examples. One is the fishing cooperatives in Denmark that were created in response to privatization policies imposed by the European Union. The policies in question aimed at making the fishing sector more competitive by allocating fishing quotas to individual boats. This policy resulted in increasing destruction of the common life of coastal communities dependent on fishing. Fishing, instead of being an integral part of the life of those communities became an independent activity driven by individual gain. MacIntyre refers to actions taken in Thorupstand, where fishing cooperative was formed that purchased a common pool of quotas and flourished under neo-liberal capitalism. It was a democratic cooperative that exhibited an admirable skill in relations with local banks and the Danish state to secure the survival and the well-being of the community (MacIntyre 2016: 179-180). Another example that MacIntyre refers to is the slum of Monte Azul in São Paulo. In response to gross poverty created by capitalism-generated inequalities, people of this *favela* rose to create local initiatives to secure their most needed goods: sanitation, disposal of sewage, street lightning, safety, education, and

healthcare, among others (ibid., 181). MacIntyre points that the success of these collective struggles to secure the common good was dependent on the creation of participatory political arenas. Even though they did not explicitly use neo-Aristotelian vocabulary to describe their activities, it is this vocabulary, argues MacIntyre, that captures best the form of practical rationality exhibited in their struggles (ibid., 182).

One could give many more such examples. Take the factory recuperation movement that arose in Argentina after the economic collapse of 2001. This movement produced its own success stories, such as the FaSinPat cooperative, that became a cornerstone to sustain the flourishing local community. Democratically run factory cooperative is linked to the local democratic structures, and the revenues generated by the cooperative is used to meet the most pressing needs of the wider community. Argentina witnessed the explosion of grass-roots initiatives from local assemblies, to unemployed workers organisations and support groups, public kitchens and support networks, to cooperatively run enterprises, factories, clinics and schools. Marina Sitrin's collection the stories of the people involved in these struggles (in Sitrin 2006) provides an invaluable picture of the events. Instead of describing theoretically the events and their significance, Sitrin allowed the participants themselves to reflect on their activities and expectations. Several aspects discerned in the stories collected are important from the Revolutionary Aristotelian perspective. The people involved clearly reject any theoretical perspective or pre-conceived programmes and attempt to find their own solutions for concrete problems and needs instead of speculating about possible large scale transformations. Many participants reflect on the education and the transformation of desires that resulted from collective action. They point to the overcoming of the egotistical impulses of capitalism and creating social relations based on solidarity, equality and dignity. During common struggles they discovered how separate activities (municipal garden, recuperated factory or school) must support each other in order to sustain a flourishing community. This is an example of the networks of giving and receiving at work. Such struggles are the examples of those grass roots initiatives to meet the needs of the local community that MacIntyre is referring to, initiatives that are important because they not only respond to the most pressing needs, but they also aim to create new alternative institutions that would be more responsive to the needs of each individual and the community as a whole. What these examples reveal is that the structures of local democratic decision making are integral parts of their success and well-being.

MacIntyre argues that practical rationality requires structures of shared deliberation where common decisions regarding matters important to the community as the whole could be reached. From the MacIntyrean perspective, the process of shared decision making should extend to the economic life of the community as well. It is exactly the lack of social control of

economic activity that makes capitalist relations destructive to rational community. One of the central aspects of modern compartmentalization is the separation of economy and politics into two distinct spheres. While politics is an arena where democratic decisions are (at least in theory) made, economy is understood as a distinct sphere governed by its own laws. A worker is "free" to work for a capitalist but without a right to make democratic decisions regarding the management of the firm.

Robert Dahl argued powerfully for the need for economic democracy from liberal premises:

> the demos and its representatives are entitled to decide by means of the democratic process how economic enterprises should be owned and controlled in order to achieve, so far as may be possible, such values as democracy, fairness, efficiency, the cultivation of desired human qualities, and an entitlement to such minimal personal resources as may be necessary to a good life. (Dahl 1985: 83)

What remains essential for the project of Revolutionary Aristotelianism is to resolve questions of progressive organisation of economy in terms of the common good. That is, how the working of contemporary economies can be organised so that they could be directed to serve the needs of individuals and communities and help the realisation of the communal and individual goods. If the relation between the individual and common good is determined by the rational activity of shared deliberation, the same argument in terms of the good must be applied to questions of economic democracy.

The first and the most fundamental step to overcome alienation for Marx was democratisation. The experiments in economic democracy, fragile as they are under the alien climate of capitalist competitiveness, aim exactly at overcoming this compartmentalisation between economy and politics. They attempt to "embed" economic relations into wider social relations of the community: to prioritize the goods of excellence over the goods of effectiveness. That "embedded market relations" does not by definition presuppose local small economy, as MacIntyre is suggesting, is demonstrated by various experiments. The long history of Mondragon cooperatives is one such example. And even though they all remain imperfect, fragile, and susceptible to many dangers and degradations, there is much to learn from these experiments.

The quote below summarises MacIntyre's views regarding the nature of work and human flourishing:

> Most productive work is and cannot but be tedious, arduous, and fatiguing much of the time. What makes it worthwhile to work and to work well is threefold: that the work that we do has point and purpose, is productive of genuine goods; that the work that we do is and is recognized to be our work, our contribution, in which we are given and take responsibility for doing it and doing it well; and that we are rewarded for doing it in a way that enables us to achieve the goods of family and community. (MacIntyre 2011a: 323)

Various grass-roots initiatives and the experiments in economic democracy are the attempts to situate economic activity and various forms of labour in the communal networks. In such form, even tedious work can be seen as contributing to the shared enterprise of social relations based on justice and equality. MacIntyre's position is that people themselves will have to answer what are the goods that they should be aiming for and what social and political organisation best allow them to achieve those goods. Real alternatives, argues MacIntyre, cannot be theoretically given in advance by theorists claiming to know what people's real interests are; they will have to emerge from various struggles (MacIntyre 1994: 271). This may explain why MacIntyre keeps his distance from any theoretical discussion about alternative institutions, but only contents himself with the description of local political arenas where such decisions about alternatives could be raised and critically evaluated by the people themselves.

5.4. Utopia

Eric Olin Wright provides a useful typology of the theories of social transformation (Wright 2010). Various political proposals for social change eventually fall into three broad categories: ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic transformations. The traditional revolutionary politics of the confrontation with established powers in order to take power and to transform the society fall into the first category. That was clearly MacIntyre's early position as a revolutionary Marxist. As argued in Chapter 4, MacIntyre was an advocate of a Leninist-type vanguard party. The idea of symbiotic transformation guides social democratic politics: using electoral democracy, reaching for a broad consensus, creating piecemeal reforms to improve the material life of most of the people, and moving towards more progressive policies step by step in a democratic way. MacIntyre's insistence on the corrupt nature of the state, its entanglement with capital – the state-capital regime – and the very real danger that the state will eventually co-opt any alternative politics clearly show that Aristotelian politics do not fall under this heading. That leaves interstitial transformation. According to Wright, interstitial transformation is characteristic of anarchist politics: ignoring state power on principle, creating alternative forms of life here and now, thus forming an alternative society in the cracks of the established one with

the hope that it will eventually expand considerably leaving the old ways behind. Even though MacIntyre insisted that his political thought is not anarchist in principle (MacIntyre 2007: 254), his turn to localised resistances at the expense of grand scale political projects is another variation of interstitial social transformation.

With an emphasis on local face-to-face decision making, small-scale politics aiming at consensus, creating alternative ways of life here and now, and the rejection of the state and electoral politics as essentially corrupt, MacIntyre's political philosophy fits with the trajectory in left-wing politics that was recently labelled "folk politics" (Srnicek and Williams 2015). After the failures of traditional party politics and neo-liberal attacks, many forces of the left have turned towards local participatory politics and a defensive stance against capital and state forces. The experiments of local direct democracy in Argentina after the 2001 crisis labelled "horizontalism" (see Sitrin 2006) or the movement of Zapatistas (see Brand & Hirsch 2004) inspired these new political ideals. In the language of one of the proponents of local politics, their goal is to "change the world without taking power" (Holloway 2002). Local experiments aim to implement alternative ways of life here and now without waiting for changes in national and international institutions. Without attacking established powers it aims to establish ideal social relationships under existing conditions. The turn to locality is defended as a necessary attempt to implement utopian ideas and to experiment with the alternative forms of life in the present, hoping that the expansion of the movement would lead to broader social change.

Politics defended by MacIntyre from *After Virtue* onwards amounts to a call for the creation of alternative modes of life here and now. Thus there is an important utopian element in Revolutionary Aristotelian political theory. It is a demand for a different life, for a community where individuals can achieve their individual and common good and flourish as human beings; this demand makes the political imagination of possible alternatives a necessity. MacIntyre argues for the necessity to embrace utopianism:

> Those most prone to accuse others of utopianism are generally those men and women of affairs who pride themselves upon their pragmatic realism, who look for immediate results, who want the relationship between present input and future output to be predictable and measurable, and that is to say, a matter of the shorter, indeed the shortest run. They are the enemies of the incalculable, the sceptics about all expectations which outrun what *they* take to be hard evidence, the deliberately shortsighted who congratulate themselves upon the limits of their vision. [...] It may be therefore that the charge of utopianism is sometimes best understood more as a symptom of the condition of those who level it than an indictment of the projects against which it is directed. (MacIntyre 1990: 234-235)

The proposals of alternative forms of political and economic organisation may seem utopian for those whose interest is to defend the existing institutions because they are those who benefit from the way things are. Thus it is essential to subvert the political language by embracing the charge of utopianism. It is in the interest of established powers to present a limited set of alternatives as the only possible courses of action. Any real alternative – that demands a change in established institutions and power relations – is necessarily outside the scope of what is presented as possible. It is necessary thus to expand the limits of possibility:

> the range of present possibilities is always far greater than the established order is able to allow for. We need therefore to acquire transformative political imagination, one that opens up opportunities for people to do kinds of things that they hitherto had not believed that they were capable of doing. (MacIntyre 2011a: 17)

Indeed, in a different context MacIntyre argued that independent practical reasoning involves the capacity to imagine possible futures. A rational moral agent must not only be aware of the present, but also of the alternative futures:

> For different or alternative futures present me with different and alternative set of goods to be achieved, with different possible modes of flourishing. And it is important that I should envisage both nearer and more distant futures and to attach probabilities, even if only in a rough and ready way, to the future results of acting in one way rather than another. For this both knowledge and imagination are necessary. (MacIntyre 1999: 74-75)

Practical rationality involves the development of our powers of imagination, political imagination included. The development of those powers is dependent on education that would allow us to acknowledge the real alternative paths that are possible under present conditions. A truly realistic education, argued MacIntyre, must save us from both the wishful thinking and the pessimistic acceptance of the present as the only possible horizon (ibid.). While MacIntyre was developing these points in reference to the individual practical reasoner we must apply his comments to the collective life of communities. It is a question of collective imagination of real utopias. In the end, the question that should guide any critical thought is: what best can we collectively achieve given the resources that the present offers? It is the question that any community concerned with the common good and the good life must always ask.

To stretch this argument to its limit: being an Aristotelian practical agent in the compartmentalised contemporary societies requires becoming utopian to a significant degree. It means aiming to achieve goals and social relations that are rejected as impossible by those who

defend the powers that be. It is in the interest of the ruling classes to keep the majority of population in the state of ignorance of both the real nature of present societies and the possibilities at hand to change these societies for the benefit of all.

MacIntyre argues that social transformation is impossible without a new radical political imaginary, and that the important part in the formation of such transformative imaginary is social conflict. MacIntyre points how such social conflict is generated by the power of the state and capital that resist attempts to transform social relations. This conflict is the source of political education: "As you and I encounter the resistance elicited by any systematic attempt to achieve human goods, we learn how to define what we are politically" (MacIntyre 2011a: 16). Conflict is one of the essential sources of education into the nature of the common good. In his earlier political comments MacIntyre talked about the resistance of local communities in face of the corrupting powers of capital and the state. Now MacIntyre talks about the resistance of the capital and state regime to the grass-roots political projects of the common good. This is already different from defensive local politics because it points towards much more active politics of social transformation. The figure of the revolutionary reappears in MacIntyre's political thought: "It is that resistance [of established powers to the grass-roots alternatives] that makes revolutionaries" (MacIntyre 2011b: 320). If there was some doubt as to whether MacIntyre's political philosophy could be adequately described as "Revolutionary Aristotelianism", here MacIntyre takes firmly the stance that it could be.

It still remains necessary to specify the term "Utopia". In other words, what is Aristotelian Utopianism? According to MacIntyre: "This Utopianism of those who force Aristotelian questions upon the social order is a Utopianism of the present, not a Utopianism of the future" (ibid.). MacIntyre's distinction between a Utopianism of the future and a Utopianism of the present points to two different strategies. A Utopianism of the future attempts aims to achieve some ideal future state through a grand scale project of social transformation. After the failures and disastrous consequences of classical Marxist political project MacIntyre remains critical of any proposals of grand scale political transformations. A Utopianism of the present that Macintyre refers to is the everyday utopianism of those who struggle to achieve the common good, security and dignity under the alienated social existence of advanced capitalist societies: the utopianism of school teachers, factory workers, immigrants, etc (ibid.). Those struggles, adds MacIntyre, in order to be successful must also learn from past forms of community and previous struggles, the various ways in which past communities flourished or decayed, so they could avoid repeating mistakes and reach a better understanding of what sort of political action is necessary to achieve necessary common goods.

This utopianism of the present is another form in which hope as social virtue manifests itself in the common struggle. Hope is "a virtue that directs us beyond the facts of our present situation, whatever it is" (MacIntyre 2011a: 19). It is worth noting the changing nature of the virtue of hope in MacIntyre's work. In his early works MacIntyre claimed that Marxism secularised the virtue of hope and even at the time of MacIntyre's rejection of Marxist political framework he still maintained that Marxism remained the only theoretical stance that allows escaping the limits imposed by the present alienating existence. It is not surprising then that with MacIntyre's growing political pessimism and his conversion to Christianity he could later insist that hope is essentially a theological virtue and that any attempts to provide a secular account of the virtue of hope fails (MacIntyre 1994). In these last comments on the utopianism of the present it is evident that MacIntyre again embraced the secular virtue of hope, a political virtue that directs grassroots struggles. As always in MacIntyre's works, the images of great historical persons accompany his ideas: Trotsky with an icepick in his head or a modern Benedict, to name some figures already discussed. *After Virtue* ended with Trotsky, Aristotle and St. Benedict. "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary" (2011a) ends with Lenin, St. Paul and St. Thomas Aquinas: three figures that, according to MacIntyre, directed humanity's hopes beyond the present. What should we make of these figures? Clearly they illustrate the turn towards more radical politics in MacIntyre's thought. A reference to Aquinas here should not be read in terms of MacIntyre's conversion to Catholicism but in terms of the theory of natural law that MacIntyre interpreted to subvert both bureaucratic authority and local prejudices. The figure of St. Paul does not appear elsewhere in MacIntyre political thought[11], so it is not entirely clear how this reference should be understood. As to MacIntyre's relationship to Lenin, it was already argued that from the neo-Aristotelian perspective he rejects classical working-class revolutionary politics. As these three figures remain only briefly mentioned by MacIntyre, this reference in the general context of Revolutionary Aristotelian remains cryptic. But as MacIntyre makes clear in this essay, his conception of local resistances is informed by the emancipatory hopes.

MacIntyre is arguing that the vision of the good life for a human being and the development of appropriate virtues are essential for successful political resistance and the creation of alternative political institutions. Such shared vision of human flourishing has a utopian part to it as it must direct struggles towards some path that breaks with the established order: "We therefore have to live *against* the cultural grain, just as we have to learn to act as economic, political, and moral antagonists of the dominant order" (MacIntyre 2016: 238).

[11] St. Paul is only mentioned in *After Virtue* in a claim that Aristotle "would have been horrified by St. Paul" (MacIntyre 2007: 184).

Various local struggles are the schools where the necessary transformative political imagination is acquired. The notion of the human good developed in neo-Aristotelian political theory exerts pressure on the contemporary order that can only be understood as utopian from the perspective of dominant institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The distinction between practices and institutions, the theory of virtues and narratives, as developed by Alasdair MacIntyre, offer theoretical resources for a radical critique of the social, political, and economic structures of contemporary societies. Those engaged in various practices are able to develop the necessary moral and intellectual virtues that allow them to raise questions about whether existing institutions support or impede the achievement of the internal goods of excellence. The narrative conception of selfhood allows people to question the nature of the various social roles that they occupy in their lives. MacIntyre therefore envisages a form of critique that rests on the practical rationality of ordinary people. Practical rationality conceptualised in MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian theory is related to the question of possibilities for collective self-determination. Thus Revolutionary Aristotelianism embraces the goals of emancipatory politics.

Revolutionary Aristotelianism draws on insights of Aristotle, Aquinas and Marx. In MacIntyre's reading, Aristotle provides an account of political order (*polis*) with an enquiry into the nature of that order and the goods it provides as its defining feature. Aquinas, especially with his theory of natural law, develops further the account of the politics of the human good. MacIntyre reads Aquinas' notion of a rational political community as a critique of the emerging state power. Marx contributes with his account of how the specific functioning of capitalist system represses the rational critical powers of ordinary people. A closer enquiry into contemporary Aristotelian readings of Marx also reveals a connection between MacIntyre's ethics of practices and virtues and Marx's analysis of alienation under capitalism.

MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism maintains a critical dialogue with Marxism. While he still shares some ethical ideals that underlie Marx's critique of capitalism and embraces Marx's analysis of the nature of capitalism as presented in *Capital*, he now rejects the form of politics characteristic of the Marxist project. Revolutionary Aristotelianism refuses to champion the working class as a special revolutionary subject, the politics of the vanguard party and the need for that party to take over state power. MacIntyre argues that such politics has irreversibly failed. Instead, Revolutionary Aristotelianism looks towards politics of various local resistances and grass-root projects for the common good.

Revolutionary Aristotelianism envisages an anti-statist, anti-elitist, participatory form of politics practised at the local level. Political rationality is seen as a natural extension of practical rationality. Politics is the process of shared deliberation that creates rational bonds between individuals in a community by allowing them to collectively engage in questioning the ends of their political association.

Political practice and the notion of the good (or human flourishing) are closely connected: the aim of political reasoning is to integrate various practices and their goods into a shared vision of the good life; political deliberations address how resources should be allocated, achievements acknowledged, etc., so that flourishing of every individual and of the community as a whole could be achieved and sustained. Thus the notion of the human good is political.

The notion of community occupies a central place in the political theory of Revolutionary Aristotelianism. My research has revealed the dual nature of the idea of community as used by MacIntyre. Community is, on the one hand, an ethico-political ideal: an alternative form of political organisation to the modern state institutions, a site of decentralised participatory politics. On the other hand, MacIntyre's account of local politics should be read against the context of his disengagement from Marxist politics of working-class revolution. That is, politics of community is conceived of as a form for emancipatory struggles in the aftermath of the failed Marxist project of grand-scale transformation and universal liberation.

The conception of local politics has undergone an important transformation in MacIntyre's philosophy. Initially, he argued for the need of protecting local communities and their ways of life. Such communities, according to MacIntyre, had to reject state bureaucracy, remain as self-sufficient as possible and resist the destructive powers of capital and the state. In his later works, MacIntyre envisages a possibility for much more active resistance and various local grass-root projects to further the common good. I have argued that some anti-capitalist struggles should be understood as examples of neo-Aristotelian politics. Thus there is a shift in MacIntyre's focus from a defensive politics of survival under the New Dark Ages to a much more active politics of social transformation.

The ethical category of the good is closely related to the social struggles and resistances. Contradictions between practices and institutions, and between the strife for the narrative unity of life and the compartmentalising nature of capitalist modernity, are important sources of ethical education about the nature of various goods. The conflict between communal projects for

common goods and the powers of the state and capital is also a source of moral and political education. It fosters the development of transformative political imagination that drives various social struggles. The notion of the good has an important utopian and emancipatory dimension.

Taken as a whole, Revolutionary Aristotelianism is a powerful defence of the rational powers of ordinary people. MacIntyre's account of practices, individual and collective narratives and virtues champions moral resourcefulness of ordinary people to grasp the essential elements of what constitutes the goods of their life and to resist manipulative social relationships. To pursue understanding of what the good life is for human being does not require any specialised theoretical knowledge. So although it conceptualises on different grounds, Revolutionary Aristotelianism remains faithful to the Marxist thesis that emancipation is always self-emancipation.

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