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# THE POLITICS OF COMMUNITARIANISM

*Taylor, Sandel, Walzer, and MacIntyre waver between granting the community authority over the individual and limiting this authority so severely that communitarianism becomes a dead letter. The reason for this vacillation can be found in the aspiration of each theorist to base liberal values— equality and liberty—on particularism. Communitarians compound liberal formalism by adding to the liberal goal, individual autonomy, the equally abstract aim of grounding autonomy in a communally shared identity. Far from returning political theory to substantive considerations of the good, communitarianism legitimizes really existing liberal politics—the politics of the nation-state.*

The "liberalism-communitarianism debate" has achieved almost canonical status in contemporary political theory, but familiarity can bring a loss of perspective. By immersing ourselves in the well-rehearsed differences between communitarians and liberals it is easy to forget the similarities. So instead of offering another disinterested exposition of—or liberal polemic against—the theories of Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer, I want to focus on their similarities with liberal theories. I postpone until another occasion the task of doing the same for the

communitarianisms of Robert Bellah et al., Roberto Unger, and Amitai Etzioni.[1]

I want first to examine communitarian political presuppositions. I will argue that when communitarians assert that the human good is only attainable within the constraints of the community, they mean that *equal individual freedom*—the primary goal of liberals—is only so attainable. Communitarianism attempts to provide a particularistic validation of the egalitarian, libertarian society liberals derive from universal principles. (I use the term "libertarian" throughout this essay to denote not only free-market libertarianism but any liberty-driven perspective. While for years many on the left have accurately called their goals "libertarian,"[2] the term has acquired a narrower, free-market meaning since the publication of Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.[3] This narrower usage misleadingly suggests that only advocates of private property are partisans of liberty.)

A commitment to equal individual freedom is quite explicit in the work of most communitarians. I will show how this political basis of communitarianism leads to further, structural similarities between liberalism and communitarianism that, in turn, explain why the communitarians cannot transcend the abstract and formalistic character of contemporary political theory. This failing, if that is what it is, is manifested in the communitarians' surprising indifference to "the groups, associations, and localities in which we actually spend our lives."[4] Generally speaking, the communities with which communitarians are concerned are not families, friendships, neighborhoods, or other arenas of close human association, but nation-states.

## Taylor's Republican Communitarianism

Unlike MacIntyre and Sandel, Taylor tends to portray liberalism positively, as a set of values that express much of what is good in modern life. But Taylor believes these values are unsoundly based on scientistic epistemology. Because they see human beings atomistically, liberals tend to think of freedom and equality in a way that threatens the institutions necessary to maintain them. For liberals subordinate to individual consent the "obligation to belong to or sustain a society, or to obey its authorities."[5]

Locke and Nozick exemplify this tendency, and this is no accident: much of Taylor's work is a defense, against atomistic individualism, of the individual freedom and equality he thinks the welfare state provides. His recent work, *Sources of the Self*, even suggests that we may need to revive theism to sustain the moral demands of "justice and benevolence";[6] and Taylor has often turned his critical attention to the New Right apotheosis of private property.[7] Indeed, what may be Taylor's most influential essay, "Atomism" (1979),[8] is a rebuttal to Nozick's free-market libertarianism from a left-libertarian perspective.

Freedom and equality are admirable liberal values, in Taylor's view, because to be fully human is to be rational, and rationality depends on "becoming a fully responsible, autonomous being."[9] A proper understanding of freedom and equality, then, should begin with human nature and with the "respect" we owe those who share our potentially autonomous essence.[10] This respect stands behind our ascription of individual rights to our fellow beings. But "to say that certain capacities command respect or have worth in our eyes is to say that we acknowledge a commitment to further and foster them."[11]

Accordingly, the familiar liberal freedom not to be interfered with is not enough. Respect for our potentially rational fellow beings not only entitles them to protection from interference, but to the means for them to become autonomous. Taylor contends that "developed freedom requires a certain understanding of the self" that is "always partly defined in conversation with others or through the common understanding which underlies the practices of our society."[12] Therefore, one of the most important preconditions for autonomy is "a political culture sustained by institutions of political participation and guarantees of personal independence," for such a culture makes mutual respect "implicit in [our] common practices."[13] "We ought to belong to or sustain" such a society as a means to the end of equal individual liberty, and we have no right to freedom from the obligations attendant on belonging to and sustaining the institutions of such a society.[14] Taylor sees the liberal insistence that property rights and other negative rights exhaust the content of freedom as self-defeating, for "in undermining such a society," such rights would make "the activity defended by the right assertion impossible of realization."[15] Nozick fails to "recognize that asserting rights itself involves an obligation to belong."[16]

By delegitimizing inviolable private property rights, Taylor makes possible the legitimacy of the welfare state. But this does not set him apart from liberals, who overwhelmingly accept the welfare state as necessary to the freedom of the dispossessed. Taylor's defense of freedom and equality substitutes "a principle of belonging or obligation" for "the ascription of certain rights to individuals,"[17] but nothing bars liberals from reconceptualizing their principles in this manner. In fact, Taylor's critique of Nozick is an immanent explication of the libertarian, egalitarian assumptions implicit in even free-market liberalism. This is why a theorist such as Will Kymlicka can make room within liberalism for whatever policies might be thought to follow from Taylor's communitarianism.[18]

Taylor seems to depart more emphatically from liberalism when he suggests that democratic government is valuable above and beyond its instrumental usefulness in promoting equal individual autonomy. "The condition for a successful participatory model," Taylor writes, "is a strong identification with the fate of the community. . . . Only such a strong identification with the society could move citizens to assume willingly the heavier burdens of a free regime. . . . This identification can perhaps be described in this way: it exists where the common form of life is seen as a supremely important good, so that its continuance and flourishing matters to the citizens for its own sake and not just instrumentally to their several individual goods."[19] But even here, Taylor has not really left liberalism behind. The reason he wants citizens to identify patriotically with the *polis* is a libertarian reason: this is the only way to win their *willing* support for the regime. The alternative to patriotism is "coercion" to extract the necessary "sacrifices," "demands," and "disciplines" from the citizenry.[20] And minimizing coercion is, of course, a liberal priority.

Taylor might respond that liberals cannot achieve their goal because their atomistic individualism prevents them from according intrinsic value to the free state and thus identifying with it. Yet Taylor has only shown that when the free state *appears* to have intrinsic value, it will be more effective in securing patriotic loyalty and thus in promoting individual freedom. In this chain of reasoning individual freedom, not the state that promotes it, is intrinsically valuable. Liberals need not, in principle, disagree with Taylor's contingent assertions about the preconditions for the survival

of freedom, so there is nothing to stop them from propounding the noble lie that the free state is intrinsically valuable to get people to sustain that state voluntarily. Neither Taylor's contention that democratic institutions create mutual respect, nor his argument that coercive exactions will be minimized when those institutions are "seen as"[21] intrinsically valuable, establishes that they *are* intrinsically valuable.

Similarly, Taylor repeatedly contrasts a collectivist ontology against "atomist modes of thought" which portray "political societies" as "collections of individuals to obtain benefits through common action that they could not secure individually." Taylor claims that the "implicit ontology" of atomism "has no place for functioning republics,"[22] because such republics "are grounded on a common good of a stronger kind than atomism allows."[23] Yet as we have seen, Taylor's arguments for democratic institutions are themselves "atomistic." By his own account, those institutions are instrumental to autonomy and the minimization of coercion — i.e., to the freedom of the individual. But because Taylor is convinced that democratic institutions will be strong enough to promote individual autonomy only if citizens think and act *as if* those institutions were intrinsically, not instrumentally valuable, he concludes that we can only secure them by adopting an ontology that makes our political participation an expression of the individual's socially "situated" self.[24] Thus, "the impact of the ontological" attack on atomism is, Taylor writes, that only "encumbered selves who shared a strong sense of community" would have the "sense of mutual commitment" needed to sustain an egalitarian welfare state.[25] Here Taylor at last breaks the bonds of liberalism — but only because he asserts that this ontology is *true.* Liberals might be willing to accept as a useful fiction a collectivist ontology since that is, in Taylor's view at least, what makes the free state seem intrinsically valuable.

Taylor suggests that the moral epistemology corresponding to his ontology aligns him with Aristotle, who taught that "you have to start for your theory of justice from the kinds of goods and the kinds of common practices organized around these goods that people actually have in a given society. Ethical theory has to comprehend given practice; it can't just abstract from it." It is on this particularistic basis that Aristotle "makes politics . . . an essential feature of the human animal."[26] Taylor seems to be using socially

given ends to bridge the is–ought gap, implying that whatever "is," in the sense of being socially accepted, "ought" to be seen as obligatory by the individual. This is the move that distinguishes communitarians from liberals, and it leads Taylor into the classic communitarian dilemma.

On the one hand, to be sure that the state will promote individual autonomy, Taylor has been driven to emphasize "the social embedding of human agents," the fact that "there is no way we could be inducted into personhood except by being initiated into . . . an ongoing conversation" within the "particular, historic communities" that comprise "the given webs of birth and history."[27] But this collectivist ontology does not confer intrinsic value only on *free* institutions. If socially given ends are obligatory for individuals merely by virtue of their membership in the society in question, this applies to inegalitarian, coercive ends as well as to those Taylor prefers.

Taylor therefore cannot endorse Aristotle without an admixture of Plato. "The goods about which one reasons in [a] context-related way include transcendent ones," so such reasoning can be critical of the socially given.[28] Thus, when Taylor is not discussing the civic humanist tradition of republican self-governance, but is expounding his ontology in the abstract, he suggests that rather than unquestioningly following the dictates of our society, we should be loyal only to communities with which we *agree* about the good. For example, he writes that one's communal "webs of interlocution" can be changed once one alters one's conception of the good, of salvation, of truth, or of wisdom. But this seems to render tautological our loyalty to the community in which we are ontologically embedded: if "sharply shift[ing] the balance in our definition of identity, dethron[ing] the given, historic community as a pole of identity . . . doesn't sever our dependence on webs of interlocution," but "only changes the webs, and the nature of our dependence," then our dependence on these webs is tenuous indeed.[29] On the one hand Taylor aligns himself with the particularistic, "Aristotelian" end of the spectrum as a means of securing devotion to the free polity; on the other hand the "Platonic," universalist essentialism that makes such a polity valuable in the first place would also seem to require that its citizens be able, like Socrates, to

dissent from communal norms. A purely particularistic moral epistemology would defeat the libertarian purpose of the collectivist ontology that confers intrinsic value on the community, for it would allow no freedom from repressive, inegalitarian communities. Like all the communitarians, therefore, Taylor modifies his particularism so that it allows individual freedom — but at the cost of making it almost indistinguishable from universalistic liberalism.

Thus Taylor explicitly repudiates communities governed by "a divinely appointed despot,"[30] and endorses patriotism only in free polities, "functioning republics," where "I feel the bond of solidarity with my compatriots in our common enterprise, the common expression of our respective dignity."[31] Such a limited form of particularism takes back with one hand what it grants with the other, for its justification seems to derive solely from its importance in undergirding the institutions necessary for enforcing the transcendent, universalistic value of individual "dignity," i.e., autonomy.[32]

When pressed on this point, Taylor has at least once suggested that his particularism is not modified but pure. Against Kymlicka's attempt to reconcile communitarianism with liberal theory, Taylor indicates that he finds intrinsic value even in cultures that are "committed to illiberal values."[33] But this view contradicts Taylor's argument against Nozick, in which Taylor holds that the intrinsic value of republican communities is compatible with its instrumental usefulness as a bulwark of equal individual freedom. And it undermines the whole point of the ontological argument, which is to confer intrinsic value on *free* communities.

Taylor's dilemma simply revisits the difficulty in deriving values from facts. When, as with all communitarians, the facts in question are socially accepted values, one must either go along with them *tout court* — with all their potential illiberalism — or else invoke a transcendent, non-"factual" criterion of the good that must be imposed universalistically on communities that do not conform to it. Once one does so, "embedding" the individual in her "webs of interlocution" is philosophically superfluous. It can only function as a propagandistic device for securing citizen allegiance to republican institutions that are actually justified not particularistically but universalistically — as being integral to the transcendent good of autonomy.

## Sandel's American Communitarianism

Sandel's communitarianism may appear less liberal than Taylor's because Sandel emphasizes ontological over normative issues.[34] In doing so he brings into bolder relief the particularistic extremes Taylor only hints at. But in the end Sandel, too, modifies his particularism to conform with egalitarian and libertarian values.

Sandel begins with the flaws he perceives in Rawls's ontology of the "unencumbered self," the self stripped of his or her particular ends and, therefore, "capable of standing back to survey and assess and possibly to revise them."[35] Rawls relies on such a self, according to Sandel, to produce a fair theory of justice. A theory of justice that catered to any one person's ends alone would be unfair. Rawls guarantees fairness in theory construction by imagining a situation in which the authors of the social contract know nothing of their actual resources or goals. Only behind the "veil of ignorance" that brings this "original position" into existence could contractors pursuing self-interest come up with a fair theory.

The theory they would contrive, Rawls argues, would be radically egalitarian. It would rule out penalizing someone in the distribution of resources just because she happens to be born without advantages, such as wealth or even talent: contractors in the original position would so fashion the principles of justice that if they themselves were born without advantages, they would not suffer. The result of fair deliberation about distribution is thus the "difference principle," which allows only those distributive inequalities that will benefit the least advantaged (say, by encouraging the most advantaged to work harder and increase the total product). Nobody, however talented, can claim more of the "primary goods" everyone values unless this allowance will help the least talented or otherwise most unlucky. Since inborn talents are a matter of luck, they must be nationalized and put to the service of all.

Sandel finds one Nozickean response to Rawls's argument for the difference principle devastating. According to Rawls's own attack on utilitarianism, the individual must be seen as intrinsically worthy of protection, but by nationalizing talents Rawls maintains this protection in the letter but not the spirit. After all, asks Nozick, what kind of individual is left once we abstract his most personal characteristics?[36] To achieve fairness, Rawls has posited an unhuman self who is, therefore, irrelevant to deliberations about justice.

Sandel proposes a way to "rescu[e] the difference principle from reliance on an apparently disembodied conception of the subject": like Taylor, then, he defends the welfare state against the free-market uses to which individualistic liberalism can be put.[37] As Sandel remarks, "the welfare state . . . offers a powerful promise of individual rights, and also demands of its citizens a high measure of mutual engagement," yet the individualistic "self-image that attends the rights cannot sustain the engagement."[38] Sandel's solution is a third alternative to seeing the resources the difference principle would distribute as owned either by disembodied Rawlsian selves or by Nozickian selves "thick with particular traits"[39] but irresponsible for each other's welfare. Under Sandel's alternative, resources, including talents, are owned by "a 'we' rather than an 'I,'" a self that embraces "more than a single empirically-individuated human being."[40] If "the bounds between the self and (some) others are thus relaxed," then "when 'my' assets or life prospects are enlisted in the service of a common endeavor, I am likely to experience this less as a case of being used for others' ends and more as a way of contributing to the purposes of a community I regard as my own."[41] So instead of relying on "rights-based liberalism" as the foundation of the welfare state—rendering it susceptible to Nozickian delegitimation[42]—Sandel turns to collectivist ontology to close the is-ought gap by the suppressed premise that the ends of the communally constituted individual are, *ipso facto*, legitimate. "The justification of my sacrifice, if it can be called a sacrifice, is not the abstract assurance that unknown others will gain more than I will lose, but the rather more compelling notion that by my efforts I contribute to the realization of a way of life in which I take pride and with which my identity is bound."[43]

Why is this sacrifice more acceptable when it is made in the name of the community that helps constitute my identity? Sandel seems to conflate the persuasiveness of the claim to a member of a community (the social "is") with the claim's truth (the normative "ought"). Without this conflation it would hardly matter if the difference principle were *experienced* as a violation of Kantian principles; it would only matter if the difference principle *did* use some people for others' ends. Has Sandel provided a rationale for the difference principle or merely a rationalization for it? Has he shown that it is just, or has he merely made it palatable?

Sandel writes that the expansion of the welfare state involves its

citizens "in a formidable array of dependencies and expectations we did not choose and increasingly reject" because, by perceiving ourselves as "unencumbered," we feel "unmediated by those common identifications or expansive self-definitions that would make . . . tolerable" our multiplying social obligations.[44] As Taylor notes, Sandel "pushes us toward the issue of whether the kind of egalitarian distribution Rawls recommends can be sustained in a society which is not bound together in solidarity through a strong sense of community."[45] But in the process Sandel seems to have erased the distinction between *judging* whether the welfare state is a good thing and *persuading ourselves* that it is, so we can assume its obligations willingly.

In place of Rawls's justification of the welfare state in terms of fairness, Sandel appeals to our preexisting, socially given commitments. Rawls, too, must begin with a preexisting commitment — to fairness. But since (at least in *A Theory of Justice*) Rawls does not premise its validity on its social givenness, he can criticize communities that do not share it. How can Sandel find similar critical purchase in communities that do not already agree with him?

The purely particularistic answer would be that he should not try. But it would defeat the egalitarian purpose of Sandel's communitarianism if he were to uphold the right of communities of free-market libertarians, or bigots, or industrialists to secede from the larger "community." His particularism is, like Taylor's, less than pure: it endorses only certain communities. His defense of the difference principle is couched as an expression of the beliefs of the *American* community.

Sandel locates the historical essence of the United States in its origins as a "civic republic" where "liberty . . . was defined, not in opposition to democracy, as an individual's guarantee against what the majority might will, but as a function of democracy, of democratic institutions and dispersed power." American liberty is, therefore, "public, or political liberty" rather than "primarily individual."[46] By contrast, in the view shared by Rawls and Nozick, according to which each individual is free to do whatever she chooses (as long as her choice is consistent with the conditions of justice, designed to secure maximum freedom for all), "deliberation about ends can only be an exercise in arbitrariness."[47]

One reason for saying that conventional liberalism renders deliberation about ends arbitrary is that liberalism makes individual

freedom intrinsically valuable, entailing that none of the things the individual might choose to *do with* her freedom could be intrinsically valuable. For if, between contradictory ends *A* and *B*, *A* is intrinsically good, then how could my ability to choose *B* be intrinsically valuable? To assert the intrinsic value of the freedom to choose from among any given set of conflicting options is to render them all equally valuable and to make choice among them arbitrary.[48] But Sandel does not make this argument, which would apply equally to the free choices of socially situated and unsituated individuals — or would, looked at from a different perspective, simply transform the arbitrariness of individual choicemaking as an intrinsic good into the arbitrariness of collective choicemaking as an intrinsic good. How, then, does Sandel escape the conclusion that public liberty is as arbitrary as the private version? He writes:

> When I act out of more or less enduring qualities of character, by contrast, my choice of ends is not arbitrary in the same way. In consulting my preferences, I have not only to weigh their intensity but also to assess their suitability to the person I (already) am. . . . Although there may be a certain ultimate contingency in my having wound up the person I am — only theology can say for sure — it makes a moral difference none the less that, being the person I am, I affirm these ends rather than those, turn this way rather than that.[49]

I determine which of my conflicting allegiances are obligatory, then, by introspecting until I find which one seems the most "compelling." One could well maintain that at bottom *all* moralities must begin with some "gut-level" feeling that *A* is more compelling than *B*. Sandel's version of this process, therefore, is notable not for being arbitrary, but because his insertion into it of communitarian allegiances in particular and personal identity in general does *not* help decide how to act.

Consider Sandel's claim that "the civil rights movement of the 1960's might be justified by liberals in the name of human dignity and respect for persons, [but] by communitarians in the name of recognizing the full membership of fellow citizens wrongly excluded from the common life of the nation."[50] The word "wrongly" may beg the question, but the word "citizens" is more worrisome. By implicitly defining the relevant community as the United States, Sandel decides the issue in advance: by legal definition, African Americans are *Americans* and thus wrongly excluded from

the privileges of citizenship. But to those whose identities were constituted by "Dixie" or by Klan membership or by a belief in states' rights or freedom of association, the issue was not so simple—or rather, it was simple but the conclusion was very different. Surely Sandel would not suggest that members of these communities, after the appropriate investigation of their personal-cum-communal identities, were right to stick by their segregationist principles, and that the only thing to be said for the civil rights movement to those who were not predisposed in its favor was that it was, eventually, backed up by the National Guard.

Sandel is careful to write, then, that "we cannot conceive ourselves . . . as bearers of selves *wholly* detached from our aims and attachments" and thus, it seems, from our communities—which allows that we *are* detached enough that we can criticize communal aims. The boundaries between self and others are "relaxed" but not entirely dissolved; they are demarcated "by the capacity of the self through reflection to participate in the constitution of its identity."[51] So while "the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity," that story remains "open-ended."[52] But if communal identity is susceptible to reflective modification, what is left of communitarianism? While Rawls himself undoubtedly *started* from his socially constituted identity as a modern, a liberal, an American citizen, a resident of Massachusetts, a Harvard professor, a member of the philosophy department, a writer of a book on justice, and so on, he derived from these identities a doctrine that repudiated particularity and established (in Sandel's view) an abstract ontology. If it is *not* legitimate for Rawls to participate in the constitution of his identity in this way (or, alternatively, if one's philosophical doctrines are not to be considered constitutive of one's identity), then there would appear to be no reason that a Klansman *should* have second thoughts about his identity. On the other hand, if one can and should criticize one's socially given ends, then Sandel's position collapses into that of Rawls.

Thus, in defining the boundaries of the American community and the criticisms that might be made against its current practices, Sandel seems to rely on the disembodied reasoning he criticizes in Rawls. He approves only the policies of universalistic mainstream liberals: civil rights, pornography regulation, plant-closing laws, affirmative action, the difference principle. In this Sandel is not

being duplicitous or hypocritical. The definition and criticism of communal particularity is bound to rely on some form of extra-communal reasoning: this is inherent in making one's communally constituted identity "open-ended." Since in any reasonably complex society there will already be disagreements about which values *are* communally given, and about how best to interpret them, an appeal to abstract criteria to adjudicate such disagreements is inevitable.

The criteria Sandel uses to demarcate the boundaries of the community and the acceptable forms of criticism seem to be informed by the liberal values of freedom and equality. Sandel, like Taylor, contends that these values require a particularistic grounding if Rawls is not to give way to Nozick. But since pure particularism would sanction illiberal communities and would leave the illiberal elements in our own community uncriticized, he modifies it, as Taylor did, in a way that makes it equivalent to liberalism.

## Walzer's Socialist Communitarianism

Walzer's rejection of liberal universalism has an even more explicitly rhetorical dimension than Sandel's and Taylor's. "The *force* of [Rawls's] singular conclusion," Walzer maintains, "is not easy to measure. It is surely doubtful that [rational contractors in the original position,] if they were transformed into ordinary people, with a firm sense of their own identity, with their own goods in their hands, caught up in everyday troubles, would reiterate their hypothetical choice or even recognize it as their own." Rawlsian values need a more persuasive footing than Rawls's theory allows. For to Walzer the question is not what we would choose if we were constrained by a veil of ignorance, but "What would individuals like us choose, who are situated as we are, who share a culture and are determined to go on sharing it?"[53]

Walzer answers that we would distribute different classes of goods according to the particular criteria our culture deems appropriate for each class. Such a distribution dictates a decentralized democratic socialism that would avoid the "tyranny" of any group over their peers, which Walzer defines as their ability to use a particular good—such as wealth—to amass goods outside the ap-

propriate "sphere."[54] "The common understanding of the goods at stake" is Walzer's is-ought bridge.[55]

From the outset, however, he is unwilling to confer equal legitimacy on all common understandings. In modern, internally differentiated societies, only those common understandings consistent with the division of social life into separate spheres are just. If a society fails to differentiate spheres—a tendency present in all societies—then it may be called to task by critics (such as Walzer). These must, however, be socially "connected" critics who draw their criticisms from the community's consensus about the spheres of justice and the criteria appropriate to them.

The idea of connected social criticism embodies the tension between pure and modified particularism. Walzer contends that "we *have to* start from where we are," that is, with "our own principles and values."[56] This "have to" may seem empirical and tautological: "there is no other starting point for moral speculation," implying that even one who repudiates the socially given can be considered a connected critic.[57] But the tautological understanding of connected criticism would leave Walzer no scope for condemning modern societies that allow the goods appropriate to one sphere to dominate in others.

Like significant elements of Taylor's and Sandel's writings, Walzer's *Spheres of Justice* originates in disagreement with Nozickian libertarianism.[58] Walzer's response to laissez-faire capitalism is, in effect, to prohibit what Marxists call "commodification" by limiting the power of money to its socially constituted sphere. As does Sandel, Walzer tries to cut the ground from under the likes of Nozick by deriving socialism from the current egalitarian and libertarian cultural consensus rather than, *à la* Rawls, from universalistic notions of individual rights that can backfire by being interpreted to sustain laissez faire. If a social critic could cavalierly repudiate the social consensus, Walzer's argument would have accomplished nothing: a free marketeer could criticize the welfare state simply by declaring private property sacrosanct. Yet if *any* social consensus were acceptable just as it is, Walzer could not advocate further steps toward socialism even where the consensus is, generally speaking, egalitarian and libertarian. So the socially given must be "authoritative for us"[59] at the same time that we can criticize it.

As Ian Shapiro notes, the need for critics to be connected to the

social milieu they criticize "can be interpreted two ways, one tacti-cal and one normative."[60] This restates the ambiguity in moving from social facts to binding values. Walzer thinks a connected so-cial critic can call us back to our shared understandings of the goods appropriate to the spheres of justice; but one wonders what the critic can be calling us back *from*, if not an "authoritative" cul-turally shared understanding, compared to which the critic's dis-agreement must be nonauthoritative. Everything depends on how the community is defined, for this determines whose opinions con-stitute the "common meanings" that decide whether there are dis-tinct spheres of justice and what standards apply to them.[61] For example, Shapiro points out that Walzer asserts "that the purpose of the sphere of education is to prepare children for democratic citizenship," but that he gives us no reason to prefer this under-standing of education to the view that it should serve "enlighten-ment or excellence"—even though "the latter values are at least as strongly represented as the former in our political culture. Put differently, we can accept Walzer's claim that for justice or equality to be realized they must be implied in our conventional behavior . . . and still believe that many possible, perhaps mutually contra-dictory, distributive practices are hidden" there.[62]

By the same token, Walzer's very insistence on separate spheres must either conservatively reproduce what is already accepted, giving him no critical leverage, or transcendentally condemn ac-cepted criteria. Imagine a laissez-faire society in which it is com-monly accepted that wealth should be able to buy anything. In this society the agreed-upon meaning *of money* is such that separate spheres are ruled out. To some extent this society is our own. Within it, the community of free marketeers holds a much broader understanding of the appropriate sphere of money than does the community of social democrats of which Walzer is a member. How do we choose between these understandings? Implicitly, Walzer appeals to the·minority status of the free-market community. He expressly sets out to develop "an egalitarianism that is consistent with liberty," and he is right to think that these values are better served, at least in theory, by socialism than by capitalism. But why pursue liberty and equality rather than private property? The an-swer is that liberty and equality are latent "in our shared under-standings of social goods. *Our* shared understandings; the vision is relevant to the social world in which it was developed; it is not

relevant, or not necessarily, to all social worlds."[63] Walzer thereby privileges his own community in two senses. He defines "us" in a way that excludes dissident minorities within, such as free marketeers. And he insulates the social-democratic consensus from the shared understandings of societies where inegalitarianism is so deeply ingrained that no connected critic will be able to establish separate spheres.

On the other hand, such societies are insulated from the imposition of egalitarianism on them by us. Here Walzer seems to provide—alone among the communitarians—a rationale for pure particularism: a refusal to extend the precepts of his own community to others. But by imposing them on secessionary free marketeers, he belies his particularism. And even Walzer's refusal to impose his community's precepts on external communities is grounded in his own community's precepts. We should abstain from imposing our conceptions of justice on societies that lack them because if we did so, "justice itself would be *tyrannical.*"[64]

We can infer that pure particularism is impossible, for even one's exemptions of some societies from one's political principles must be based on a universalistic criterion that grants to each community the right to live as "it" wishes. Pure particularism is similar in both form and content to neutralist conceptions of liberalism: by granting individuals the right to live as they please, neutralist liberalism violates neutrality between libertarians and paternalists, just as Walzer invokes a communally grounded egalitarianism even while attempting to maintain neutrality between egalitarian and hierarchical communities. Neither liberals nor communitarians respect neutrality, for liberal individuals may not live as they please if this interferes with the equal right of others to do so; and communitarian communities may not do as they please if they please to impose their standards on other communities. Walzer's theory, its epistemological particularism modified to ensure equality and liberty, joins those of Sandel and Taylor in retreating to liberal principles.

## MacIntyre's Premodern Communitarianism

MacIntyre shares with Sandel and Taylor the tendency to define his own position (which he never calls communitarianism) against "individualism." By this term MacIntyre means the methodological

(ontological and epistemological) stance I have been calling universalism. But while the other opponents of universalism embrace liberal values, MacIntyre seems to reject liberalism completely. My claim is nonetheless that MacIntyre's magnum opus, *After Virtue*,[65] and indeed MacIntyre's entire *oeuvre*, is only antiliberal methodologically, and that, as with the other communitarians, his attempt to combine a particularistic methodology with liberal values explains the structure and, ultimately, reveals the futility of his project.

*After Virtue* begins by observing that contemporary moral discourse gets us nowhere, because its participants start from incompatible value judgments. Our interminable debates over such issues as abortion, the legitimacy of the welfare state, and the morality of war suggest to MacIntyre that we "possess no unassailable criteria" by which we can hope to overcome "the conceptual incommensurability of . . . rival arguments."[66] MacIntyre dates this impasse to the seventeenth century. Until then, the teleological ethics of Aristotle provided "genuine objective and impersonal standards which provide[d] rational justification for particular policies, actions and judgments and which themselves in turn [were] susceptible of rational justification."[67] But in the modern era, although we continue to express our values in a vocabulary containing fragments of premodern moral terminology, we treat these fragments as meaningless taboos, groundless injunctions whose rational justification has long been forgotten. The "emotivist" philosopher C. L. Stevenson argued that the values we defend are nothing but expressions of our unjustifiable personal feelings. While MacIntyre rejects the universal validity of emotivism, he does think it accurately describes the ultimate nature of modern moral discourse. No wonder our public debates break down: we quickly encounter each other's unreasoned convictions, to which we can respond only by reaffirming our own.

This account of our predicament sends MacIntyre back to the Greeks for a remedy—but not, at first, to Aristotle. Instead, MacIntyre begins with the predecessor to classical Athenian ethics: Homeric morality, one of a variety of "heroic" ethics found in premodern societies in which one's social position dictated one's obligations. MacIntyre presents the unreflective correspondence between individual duty and one's place in the social order displayed in the *Iliad* as the polar opposite of modern emotivism, and

he preserves something of this correspondence in his own communitarianism. MacIntyre admires how "the self of the heroic age lacks precisely that characteristic which . . . some modern moral philosophers take to be an essential characteristic of human selfhood: the capacity to detach oneself from any particular standpoint or point of view, to step backwards, as it were, and view and judge that standpoint or point of view from the outside."[68]

Heroic versions of embedded selfhood begin from "some condition of pure historical contingency, from the beliefs, institutions, and practices of some particular community which constitute a given. Within such a community authority will have been conferred upon certain texts and certain voices. . . . The beliefs, utterances, texts, and persons taken to be authoritative are deferrred to unquestioningly."[69] This heroic particularism corresponds to the pure communitarianism with which Walzer, Sandel, and Taylor begin. Like them, MacIntyre soon modifies his initial praise for the authority of the community over the individual. His two most important modifications can be called the philosophical and historical provisos to his particularism.

According to MacIntyre, Aristotle was heir to a heroic tradition that, due to social changes, had fallen into a state of incoherence. The clash between the more cooperative values of the Athenian *polis* and the competitive values of Homer's heroes, as well as doubts about Homeric values caused by contact with other cultures, led Aristotle to set himself "the task of giving an account of the good which is at once local and particular—located in and partially defined by the characteristics of the *polis*—and yet also cosmic and universal."[70]

Aristotle's dictum that man is a political animal can be used to illustrate both aspects of his project. On the one hand, the phrase "a political animal" marks Aristotle's debt to heroic ethics by suggesting that our proper ends are set for us by our community. Aristotle sought to link "the concepts of virtue and goodness on the one hand and those of happiness, success and the fulfilment of desire on the other," as they were linked in heroic societies.[71] Rather than following Plato in setting reason against inclination—an impractical basis for a realistic political order—Aristotle saw that we can be trained, through participation in "practices" that presuppose socially given criteria of excellence, to attain the inclinations, the "virtues," that are internally validated by such practices. Such vir-

tues reflect our nature as political beings in two senses. First, the process of acquiring them requires that during a training period we be subordinated to socially established norms. Second, the end result of this training is to premise our happiness on success in activities that are, again, socially established.[72]

On the other hand, the "cosmic and universal" pole in Aristotle's thought is indicated by his assumption that "man is" something or other by nature. This assumption gives rise to the philosophical proviso. It elevates *the particularism of heroic ethics into the good of man qua man.* While in heroic ethics there is no gap between facts and values because what one *is*, according to the norms of one's society, directly determines the excellences one *should* pursue (so that even to describe an individual's role in such terms bifurcates it), in Aristotelian ethics any is-ought gap is precluded because what one essentially is, the universal human *telos*, directly determines the excellences one should pursue. These virtues are those internal to practices, because practices, being doubly social, express our political nature.

Yet the philosophical proviso also *limits* "conventional and local" practices. For one thing, it subjects them to "natural and universal ... rules of justice."[73] These rules prohibit practices and virtues that run counter to the "qualities of mind and character which would contribute to the realization of [the] common good" of those engaged in "founding a community to achieve a common project."[74] "The absolute prohibitions of natural justice" follow, that is to say, from Aristotle's recognition "that the individual is indeed intelligible only as a *politikon zôon.*"[75] Examples of offenses against the common good "would characteristically be the taking of innocent life, theft and perjury and betrayal."[76]

The philosophical proviso also limits particularism by establishing the purpose of justice as allocation according to desert. "To deserve well is to have contributed in some substantial way to the achievement of those goods, the sharing of which and the common pursuit of which provide foundations for human community," and the achievement of which "is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice."[77] At first glance this may seem less to limit than to enshrine particularism; but it rules out a particularistic defense of communities in which distribution accords with one's accumulation of goods that are external to practices — goods to which practical activity is merely instrumental. External goods

(e.g. power, fame, and money) "are always some individual's property and possession," and "the more someone has of them, the less there is for other people."[78] In this respect they are in conflict with the essentially social human essence. This explains why Aristotle juxtaposes against the virtue of justice the vice of *pleonexia,* or acquisitiveness.

In addition to subjecting communal practices and virtues to natural law and to the standard of distributive desert, the dictates of essential human nature, when joined with a Sophoclean insight that Aristotle suppressed, but that was revived in the Middle Ages, limit the local and particular in a third way. This insight is the recognition of "a multiplicity of goods," and therefore of "the centrality of opposition and conflict in human life"—conflict, that is, "of good with good": *tragic* conflict.[79]

Pervasive tragic conflict would lead to something like the situation facing modern emotivists—"*too many* conflicts and *too much* arbitrariness," which could only be resolved arbitrarily—were it not for the fact that by positing a human *telos,* Aristotle subordinates practices and their virtues to "the notion of a type of whole human life which can be called good."[80] What it means to lead such a life, however, depends on the historical proviso.

The historical proviso originates in the medieval concept of a "narrative quest." This concept historicizes the Aristotelian *telos,* since for medieval Christians we are in this life engaged on a journey from a sinful beginning toward the salvific future.

> The medieval vision is historical in a way that Aristotle's could not be. It situates our aiming at the good . . . in contexts which themselves have a history. To move towards the good is to move in time and that movement may itself involve new understandings of what it is to move towards the good.[81]

Pure, heroic communitarianism is historical only in a backward-looking sense: the socially given may have a history, but that history ends in the present. The historicity added by the concept of a quest is primarily futuristic. "An adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present."[82] Thus, while

> the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity . . . rebellion against my

identity is always one possible mode of expressing it. . . . The fact
that the self has to find its moral identity in and through its member-
ship in communities such as those of the family, the neighborhood,
the city and the tribe does not entail that the self has to accept the
moral *limitations* of the particularity of those forms of community.
Without those moral particularities to begin from there would never
be anywhere to begin; but it is in moving forward from such partic-
ularity that the search for the good, for the universal, consists.[83]

Once Aristotle's communitarianism is modified by the historical
proviso, the result is MacIntyre's abstract and seemingly empty
specification of the human *telos*, the "type of whole human life
which can be called good," as consisting in "the unity of a narrative
quest," such that "the good life for man is the life spent in seeking
for the good life for man."[84] What makes such a life possible is that
it is conducted within the confines of a community animated by "a
history" that makes each of its members, willy-nilly, "one of the
bearers of a tradition"—by which MacIntyre means not only a
body of just, socially given practices and virtues, but one that can
be transcended through future-directed "criticism and invention."[85]

Thus, while insisting that we should learn from heroic societies
that "all morality is always to some degree tied to the socially local
and particular and that the aspirations of the morality of modernity
to a universality freed from all particularity is an illusion,"[86] MacIn-
tyre allows that the "authoritative texts or utterances" of a tradition
are "susceptible to . . . alternative and incompatible interpreta-
tions";[87] debates between these interpretations constitute traditions
as ongoing *arguments*.

Kymlicka has underscored how this view of a tradition oscillates
between pure particularism and universalism. If we can participate
in a tradition by criticizing it—if we can express our communally
given identity by rejecting it—"then it's not clear how MacIntyre's
view is any different from the liberal individualist one he claims to
reject."[88] Just as Walzer, Sandel, and Taylor alternate between de-
scriptions of our ineluctable embeddedness in tautologically de-
fined communities and proscriptions of certain types of commu-
nity, MacIntyre faces a contradiction between, on the one hand, his
sustained polemic against "modern individualism" for claiming that
"I can always, if I wish to, put in question what are taken to be the
merely contingent social features of my existence," and, on the

other, his description of "*all* reasoning" as taking place "within the context of some traditional mode of thought."[89] If all reasoning is traditional, then modern individualism qualifies as a tradition; but how, then, can MacIntyre criticize it, or its emotivist denouement, as being antithetical to tradition?

It would seem that either one must accept the universalization of particularism achieved by the provisos, depriving one of any communitarian basis for criticizing liberalism, or, to condemn liberalism, one must defend the pure authority of the socially particular over the individual. But taking the latter course means replacing the clash of irrational individual "preferences" to which MacIntyre objects with an equally irrational clash of communal traditions; emotivism between individuals gives way to emotivism between communities.

The socially given values of MacIntyre's readers are precisely the ones he claims to oppose. How can he ask universalists to renounce their hostility to tradition when this hostility *is* the tradition of which they "find" themselves "the bearers," whether they "like it or not"?[90] Either moderns must submit quietly to their fate and continue as moderns, or, if they are to follow MacIntyre in repudiating their tradition, they must transcend and criticize it. But in the case of this particular tradition, to criticize and transcend is to reaffirm. Criticism itself, even MacIntyre's criticism of universalistic criticism, is universalistic. When he writes that "there is no standing ground, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or other,"[91] one cannot but notice the self-contradictory universality of his claim: it must, to be valid against those who believe there *is* a standing ground apart from tradition, transcend its origin in MacIntyre's particularistic tradition and attain the universalistic status it denies is possible.

While in *After Virtue* (1981) MacIntyre does not accord to liberalism the status of a tradition, depicting it instead as the antithesis of all tradition, in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990) he attempts to show that he can criticize the liberal tradition without resort to transcendent, universalistic arguments of the very sort he objects to in liberalism. MacIntyre's post-*After Virtue* approach has emphasized that when traditions are viewed as ongoing debates, they can sometimes encounter

dead ends in which progress stops, or crises in which their presup-
positions are called into question. At such junctures they can be
superseded by other traditions that offer ways around the obstruc-
tion and that explain, in terms acceptable to adherents of the sty-
mied tradition, why that tradition has reached an impasse and why
only those who adopt the competing tradition's standpoint can
understand the genesis of the first tradition's difficulties. So rather
than condemning liberalism as antitraditional, MacIntyre seeks to
show how it is itself a tradition that has reached certain conun-
drums that can only be resolved, and explained, from MacIntyre's
own (Thomistic) tradition.

While Walzer seems to advise social critics that a community's
interpretation of itself is more likely to be altered by immanent
than by transcendent criticisms, in his post-*After Virtue* works
MacIntyre seems to describe how intellectual history can be a more
effective weapon in intertraditional battles than are appeals to ex-
tratraditional standards. Like the other communitarians, though,
MacIntyre does not see himself as merely providing sound tactical
advice for participants in ideological warfare. He thinks intellectual
history is not only effective as rhetoric and illuminating as scholar-
ship, but valid as a form of argument capable of transcending the
limitations of a tradition while avoiding the "individualistic" illu-
sion that one can judge traditions "from a purely universal and
abstract point of view that is totally detached from all social partic-
ularity."[92]

Yet in these works MacIntyre depends on a tacit universalism in
assuming that progress in a tradition must always be seen, from
within, as good, that stasis must be seen as bad, and that challenges
to a tradition must be seen as crises rather than simply invalid
criticisms. It is not at all difficult to imagine a tradition—such as,
perhaps, that of Homeric Greece—imbued with, even defined by,
the opposite belief, either because it equates change of any kind
with evil or because it sees itself as possessing the final understand-
ing of the good and, therefore, views the notion of "progress" away
from the status quo as a contradiction. From the standpoint of such
a tradition, MacIntyre's form of intertraditional rationality would
be an hubristic and putatively universalistic imposition. This
merely emphasizes the universalistic foundations of the historical
proviso that sets traditions in forward motion.

Conversely, universalists hold that a tradition's ability to explain

a competing tradition's difficulties is irrelevant, strictly speaking, to the truth of either tradition; all that counts is which tradition is right, not which tradition produces better intellectual history. From this perspective, MacIntyre's criterion for mediating between traditions constitutes a universalistic criticism of universalism—and an invalid one at that.

The criticism of the socially given that Walzer, Sandel, and Taylor wish to allow stems from the particular community of which they are members—the *fin-de-siècle* left, imbued with the values of liberty and equality. MacIntyre is usually seen as being a thoroughgoing critic of that community; but why does he reproduce their dilemma? Why does he elevate communal particularism to the status of an intrinsic good only to insist on provisos that disqualify certain forms of community and that allow individual criticisms of the communities left standing?

## MacIntyre as Marxist

The outlines of an answer become clear if we quickly review the evolution of MacIntyre's thought.[93] He begins as a (critical) Marxist and, even as late as *After Virtue*, is still grappling with the question of where Marxism went wrong. In his first major works of the 1950s, MacIntyre diagnoses the problem with Marxism as its predictive philosophy of history, which leads to the dogmatic persecution of those who dissent from the predictions. MacIntyre seeks a remedy by returning to the source of the normative commitments that had originally inspired the young Marx: prophetic Christianity.[94] Prophecy could identify good and evil without recourse to historical prediction, pointing the way to a form of community in which individuals, no longer divided by class antagonisms, could live together in freedom and equality. By the end of the decade, however, MacIntyre has located an alternative source of legitimacy for his vision of a socialist community: a "permanent and long-run" human desire for free communal attachment.[95] This theory affords MacIntyre a new vantage-point from which to criticize Stalinism. He now interprets Stalinism as a combination of state power with deterministic Marxist predictions of inevitable revolution, resulting in a disastrous legitimation of individualistic "desire as it is, random and anarchic, seeking power and immediate pleasure only

too often"—in contrast to the communal desire satisfied by true socialism.[96]

In 1960 MacIntyre turns to the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* (published in 1953), who emphasized the social origins of concepts, to explain why determinism is not only dangerous but invalid: social conventions, not physical movements of the sort that could yield positivist predictions, determine the meaning of human action.[97] Wittgenstein also suggests to MacIntyre an explanation for why Marxism never made headway in Britain. The Industrial Revolution had destroyed the religious basis for "over-all social agreement as to the right ways to live together" that could alone render "intelligible" any "claims to moral authority."[98] But this explanation opens a fissure between what legitimizes socialism in the mind of the philosopher—its expression of a characteristic human desire—and what could have legitimized it in the minds of the workers: its expression of socially authorized norms.

In MacIntyre's *A Short History of Ethics* (1966), a similar fissure separates, on the one hand, the minimal social agreement on impersonal norms that all societies, good and bad, require if action within them is to be "intelligible," and on the other hand the specific norms that can bring our desire for social unity to fruition.[99] MacIntyre's Wittgensteinian turn raises the obvious question of how to distinguish good social consensus from bad, societies that achieve intelligibility through a consensus around hierarchical, coercive values from those that do so through an egalitarian, libertarian consensus. In *A Short History of Ethics*, MacIntyre opts to render Wittgensteinian social intelligibility virtually superfluous by means of continued recourse to the communal desire thesis. In his book on Herbert Marcuse (1970), however, MacIntyre confronts another Marxist theorist of desire satisfaction—and repudiates him. Marcuse, like MacIntyre, used essential, permanent desires as a criterion against which empirical, current desires could be judged— inevitably with "elitist" implications.[100] Having rejected Marcuse's paternalism, MacIntyre had no alternative but to use the idea of socially conferred intelligibility itself as a criterion for distinguishing good from bad social consensus.

This is what the philosophical and historical provisos of *After Virtue* accomplish, by tempering particularism with universalistic and critical elements.[101] The philosophical proviso enables us to sift the various possible forms of community, using natural-law crite-

ria to screen out those that are antithetical to the precondition of intelligibility, i.e., socially established practices. The proviso thus preserves what is valuable in particularism: socially established norms of the kind embodied in practices *equalize* the individuals who are subordinated to them. Having been socialized—by force, if necessary[102]—to accept the legitimacy of the ends that are internal to practices, the members of a community can consummate the ideal of free community because, sharing the same ends, they can achieve them noncoercively.[103] In modern societies, by contrast, each individual, as the source of his own values, confronts his fellows as adversaries whom he must manipulate or coerce in order to get his way.[104] Social rationality is replaced by nonrational forms of persuasion that operate in the absence of intelligibility: bureaucratic and therapeutic manipulation.[105]

Because MacIntyre understands capitalism to depend on an ideology of managerial bureaucracy,[106] the distinction between ends that are internal and those that are external to practices provides a criterion for condemning capitalism—and it lays the foundations of socialism by making internal goods the standard of desert. For "the rules of a market economy . . . detach the rewards of economic activity from any conception of merit or desert. When prices and wages are determined within a market framework, such expressions as 'just price' and 'just wage' are deprived of application"; yet "justice in exchange requires that conceptions such as those of a fair wage and a just price should have application."[107] Controlled prices are, of course, antithetical to market economies. Moreover, "for an Aristotelian acquisitiveness as such, *pleonexia*, is a vice, indeed the vice which is the principal form of injustice."[108] Hence MacIntyre's repeated calls for banning usury, which he derives from a Thomistic "version of the labor theory of value"[109]—and which would have the effect of ending any private, socially organized capital accumulation.

The philosophical proviso also guides the criticism of the socially given that is sanctioned by the historical proviso. It fills in the content of the future *telos* toward which a narrative quest points. A life evaluated as a narrative whole is one that, while starting in the socially particular past, "move[s] forward from" it in the "search for the good, for the universal." The standpoint of the future is thus the capacity to identify the "moral limitations" of the socially particular.[110] MacIntyre provides an example of how this works when he

considers Aristotle's exclusion of slaves, barbarians, and the poor from political participation and the possession of certain virtues. Aristotle's error, according to MacIntyre, was that he failed to account for future possibilities: he "did not understand the transience of the *polis* because he had little or no understanding of historicity in general."[111] The "moral limitations" of a social order are its departures from the egalitarian and libertarian values that have animated MacIntyre's work from the start.

### Communitarian Formalism

The ongoing debates within MacIntyre's traditions are not, however, restricted to rectifying inequities in the socially given. The idea of tragically incommensurable goods would appear to provide fuel for endless (but rational and therefore noncoercive) intratraditional discussions of how to classify, rank, specify, and reconcile communal goods and how to impart the corresponding virtues. The theoretical activity of MacIntyre's exemplary traditionalists, Aristotle and Aquinas, suggests this. One might therefore be tempted to conclude that MacIntyre has succeeded in infusing ethical thought with substance, or more generally that communitarianism, as is often said, restores "the good" to the place from which liberalism displaced it in favor of "the right."

This conclusion may seem to be confirmed by MacIntyre's, Taylor's, and Sandel's denunciations of the relativism they perceive in the liberal attempt to remain "neutral" on questions of value by leaving them open to individual judgment. Sandel notes that liberalism is far from neutral when it comes to "toleration and freedom and fairness"; these "are values too, and they can hardly be defended by the claim that no values can be defended."[112] So in one sense, at least three of the four communitarians seem to be absolutists: defenders of "the good" against the relativizing tendencies of "neutral" liberal rights.

But in fact communitarians are as prone to relativism as liberals. Communitarian relativism takes two forms, corresponding to the tension between pure and modified particularism, i.e., between social facts and the particular values upheld by modern communitarians.

The first form of communitarian relativism has been character-

ized by Ronald Beiner as a "formalism," since "to affirm community as such is to abstain from judgment about the substantive attributes of a given community"—precisely like the liberals who relativistically abstain from judgment about the substantive attributes of a given individual's chosen way of life.[113] A concise statement of communitarian formalism is provided by MacIntyre's endorsement of "membership in a community which shares allegiance to *some* tolerably specific ultimate overall conception of the human good"[114]: *which* conception of the good is, apparently, unimportant, since any conception that meets the minimal standards of natural law and is open to criticism will promote nonmanipulative enquiry and noncoerced action.

But recall that when Sandel criticized the disembodied self's deliberation about ends as a mere "exercise in arbitrariness," he addressed the question of whether by privileging communal over individual ends he was not himself recommending arbitrariness. His answer brings out the second form of communitarian relativism. Communally constituted ends are not "arbitrary in the same way" as individually constituted ends, Sandel wrote, because in consulting communally constituted ends "I have not only to weigh their intensity but also to assess their suitability to the person I (already) am."[115] It would be difficult to compose a better expression of the thoughtful modern individualist's creed: her desires, while perhaps not the crass "tastes and preferences" of the neoclassical (and Austrian)[116] economist (which include impulsive as well as introspective desires), are still expressions of her preexistent self, so introspection into how she *already* feels becomes decisive in determining what is good "for her."

Now we have a paradox, for it is exactly this complacency toward one's pregiven preferences that communitarians criticize when they decry the modern triumph of "the right" over "the good." In explaining how his position does not result in intercommunal relativism Sandel, at least, appears to have returned to the interpersonal relativism embodied in the neutral liberal state he attacks.

The paradox is explained by the liberal content of the specific "goods" valorized by Sandel and the other communitarians: "toleration and freedom and fairness."[117] It is true that, as Sandel notes, these are values, so a government that enforces them is not, strictly speaking, neutral. But the intuitive plausibility of the myth of lib-

eral neutrality reflects an important difference between these values
and others, such as beauty or truth or happiness. Truth, beauty, and
happiness are first-order values: if happiness is good, it follows
that, absent countervailing values, one should do whatever will
create happiness. By contrast, toleration, freedom, and fairness al-
low choices among first-order values: if toleration is good, it fol-
lows only that one should do what will allow people to choose . . .
to do whatever they wish. Truth, beauty, and happiness are sub-
stantive ends; toleration, freedom, and fairness are means enabling
the production of *either* truth or falsehood, beauty or ugliness,
happiness or misery—depending on the choices of those on whom
toleration, freedom, and fairness confer authority, liberty, and re-
sources.

In this respect the liberal state *is* sui generis, albeit not neutral.
For the liberal state adjudges as good not things that are good in
themselves, but things (such as civil liberties and Rawlsian primary
"goods") that allow its citizens to pursue whatever *they* judge to be
good. The reason communitarians face the same relativistic danger
as liberals is that like liberalism, communitarianism is a formal
doctrine concerned with who should have the authority to make
substantive decisions, not with the content of those decisions.

The contrary impression is due not only to the communitarians'
antineutralism, but to their tendency to be "virtue theorists." In
calling on the state to protect certain character traits, such as a
patriotic devotion to the free state, communitarians are more pre-
scriptive than most liberals, who relegate character formation to
the private sphere that is to be protected from state interference.
But even a virtue theory remains abstract and formalistic to the
extent that the reason for developing the virtues in question is
either that the practices of our community—*whatever* those prac-
tices are—demand them; or that by being trained to communally
specified virtues, we are (individually or collectively) enabled to
choose freely among tragically incommensurable goods, life pro-
jects, or political options—*whichever* goods, projects, or options we
choose.

Liberals, too, have an is-ought bridge. By conferring intrinsic
value on freedom of choice, liberalism makes goods of one's given
preferences. In the same way that *only* an individual with *uncriticiza-
ble* preferences is intrinsically entitled to be free to act on them—
regardless of their *content*—only the assumption that the commu-

nity's preferences are intrinsically good confers on it the authority
to govern individual action.

By the same token, the liberal violation of neutrality in theory
and in practice has its parallel in communitarianism. In theory, just
as what might be called "pure liberalism" is nonneutral toward
paternalists' individual preferences, pure particularism is nonneu-
tral toward the values shared by communities of universalists. In
practice, all liberals—even classical liberals—combat the egoistic
implications of their doctrine by prohibiting individual actions and
conditions that violate the freedom of other sovereign individuals.
They trump liberty with equality. Similarly, communitarians de-
fuse the repressive implications of their doctrine by defining the
community so its members are free to choose among goods and
free to criticize the socially given. Homer is to communitarianism
as is Max Stirner to liberalism.

## Communitarian Abstraction

Pure, particularistic communitarianism would be as relativistic as
liberalism because it would replace a grant of arbitrary authority to
the individual to determine the good with a grant of arbitrary
authority to the community to do the same. Communitarianism as
we know it, modified communitarianism, has the worst of both
worlds, granting authority to the community only as a means to
the arbitrary authority of the individual. The result of this double
formalism is to intensify the abstraction of modern political theory
from concrete human concerns.

Liberal theory is abstract insofar as it precludes assessing the end
results of its conferral of authority on the individual. Liberals *could*
argue that state paternalism is counterproductive and that a policy
of religious toleration, by preventing internecine warfare, is instru-
mental to the goods that flourish in a peaceful society.[118] By the
same token, free-market liberals could argue that the welfare state
does more harm than good and that laissez faire, both by prevent-
ing the wasteful and debilitating struggle for political power and in
other respects, is instrumental to a variety of valuable ends. But for
the most part liberal theorists, left and right, fail to make such
arguments, let alone back them up with dispassionate and careful
research (and even the economists who do so tend to be narrow in

their conception of valuable ends). What kind of *life* results from the entrenchment of individual freedom? What goods and what evils are attributable to it? These questions are largely absent from the pages of Rawls and Dworkin and Nozick—but also from the pages of MacIntyre, Walzer, Sandel, and Taylor.

It is true that MacIntyre's writings on narrative unity often tempt one to imagine he is trying to show the way to a more fulfilling life. If this were his intention, we could say that he had devised a theory that (if true) contains more substance, more about the good, than the last two decades of liberal political thought combined. Unfortunately this is not his intention: if it were he would be a utilitarian, but "utilitarianism cannot accomodate the distinction between goods internal to and goods external to a practice," he claims.[119] MacIntyre does not favor internal goods because their attainment is inherently more satisfying—although such an argument could easily be made. Rather, they are preferable because in subordinating us to common ends, they reduce manipulation by allowing us to relate to each other on the basis of shared impersonal standards rather than conflicting individual goals. Why, then, is narrative unity valuable? Not because being able to tell a story about oneself that has a coherent beginning, middle, and end feels fulfilling, but because narrative unity requires that the communal goods that free us from manipulation be transformed into a tradition and thereby opened to criticism on the basis of its future possibilities.

Similarly, Taylor writes evocatively of the perception that in modern society "work is dull, monotonous, without meaning, 'soul-destroying.'"[120] He explains how the consumerist multiplication of needs and therefore of dissatisfactions may to some degree counterbalance the great achievements of capitalist societies: the relief of preindustrial suffering and squalor and the extension to almost all of the joys of privacy, nature, and companionship. He discusses the tendency of the quest for personal fulfilment to subject the nuclear family, originally the locus and to some extent the product of this quest, to pressures that may undermine it. But then he resorts to the idiom of freedom in describing these matters, closing off the impetus to research and contemplation as surely as liberalism does by making liberty an end in itself. If, as Taylor writes in this mode, worker-manager relationships do not resemble the "equal, autonomous" image of consumer-producer relationships because workers "for the most part . . . stand very much as

subordinates in command relationships"; if by succumbing to mindless materialism we confront "a challenge to our image of ourselves as realized moderns determining our purposes out of ourselves, dominating and not being dominated by things"[121] — then that is enough to decide these questions. Any desire to weigh the effects of these phenomena on, say, our sense of well-being is thereby stifled, as is any similar scrutiny of the effect on the texture of our lives of Taylor's omnibus solution: "the politics of the ecological Left," which aims "to decrease the overload on centralized, bureaucratized governments" only so as to increase the power possessed and the decisions made by "smaller, more accessible public authorities," furthering the goal of political participation.[122]

### Community or Polity?

A similar problem mars, to some extent, Beiner's unique and invaluable quasicommunitarian contribution to contemporary political thought, *What's the Matter with Liberalism?* (1990). Beiner repudiates the liberal assumption that people are automatically equipped to be "the supreme arbiters of their own interests and preferences" and seeks instead to "illuminate needs and desires of human life that the subjects themselves have failed to acknowledge."[123] In the process he emphasizes, with indelible effect, that beneath the veneer of liberal neutrality "there is a distinctive liberal way of life, characterized by the aspiration to increase and enhance the prerogatives of the individual; by maximal mobility in all directions, throughout every dimension of social life (in and out of particular communities, in and out of socioeconomic classes, and so on); and by a tendency to turn all areas of human activity into matters of consumer preference; a way of life based on progress, growth, and technological dynamism."[124] Beiner ascribes these characteristics to "one particular vision of the good, namely, that choice in itself is the highest good."[125]

One would expect that to sustain his charge that the resulting choices are "banal, empty, and stultifying," Beiner would attempt to provide what neither liberalism nor communitarianism does: an alternative to choice as the highest good, an "independent, external standard" by which to evaluate both individual and collective choices.[126] But while Beiner endorses Aristotle's "ideal of a life that

is not mere restless striving," he seeks to actualize it in the very form that, as he notes, "is decisive for theorists like Taylor, MacIntyre, and Sandel": a civic republican state that might "render individuals more *autonomous*," both by "removing or inhibiting the power of other social forces to captivate and bewitch individuals without directly coercing them," and by "empower[ing] those included in it to contribute to the shaping of a shared collective destiny."[127] As a means to this end Beiner favors a "socialist" program of full employment, economic planning, and reduced income inequality that he describes as "a beefed-up welfare state plus a greater sense of political involvement"—the goal of which is "the greater exercise of political citizenship."[128]

One wonders how this goal marks a departure from either liberal or communitarian formalism, which, as Beiner trenchantly shows, differ from each other (if at all) only over the question of whether the individual or a group of individuals should be autonomous.[129] It is true that in Beiner's view citizenship is concerned with "what is good" for the community, but he describes this good only in such purely formalistic terms as "the achievement of shared purposes"— whatever those purposes may be.[130] And as his references to the "empowering" capacities of political participation show, his program of collective autonomy serves the same end, individual autonomy, cherished by the other modified communitarians' formalisms.

Just as distressing is how quickly Beiner's keen critical faculties fail when he turns from dissecting the culture of consumer sovereignty to that of the sovereign citizen. He condemns liberalism for allowing that "one may be a citizen in good standing and yet do absolutely nothing after having attained membership: not vote, not participate in jury service, not read newspapers or keep oneself informed politically."[131] But just as there can be commodity fetishism, so can there be polity fetishism: the illusion—rampant in the socially    conscious,    newspaper-reading,    well-informed intelligentsia—that compulsive attention to current events somehow *matters*. There are at least two issues here: the effectiveness of participation in mass democracies, and its intrinsic value.

On the one hand, Beiner worries that not enough people are involved, and not actively enough, in the crucial policy decisions that affect their lives; this is part of why he endorses civic republicanism. But while he quotes at length the key passage from

· Schumpeter that sets forth the problem of the competency of mass electorates, and he backs it up with a small sample of the many measures of public ignorance about political issues,[132] Beiner does not consider whether political ignorance may be rational and inevitable, given not only the complexity of public issues but the infinitesimal effect any one voter, or even political activist, has on their outcome. Does it make sense, as more than a ritual act, to spend time and energy studying and worrying about "issues" that, in truth, even specialists do not understand and that, in any case, one has no chance of influencing? Important questions about the nature of democratic culture, the illusions it fosters, and the advisability of undertaking drastic economic reforms in the interest of remedying a possibly intractable situation go unasked.

Is political participation good even if it *is* hopelessly incompetent and ineffective? Beiner can only justify the discrepancy between his astute criticism of theoretical formalism and his hearty endorsement of civic republicanism with the unargued assertion that citizenship is "one of the essential needs that we have as political beings."[133] It is not, of course, indisputable that we *are* political beings, certainly not in the sense Beiner has in mind. Why he assumes that we are is perhaps revealed in another casual aside, where he contrasts "the imperatives of private consumption" to "the satisfactions of collective responsibility."[134] The latter phrase may puzzle those who have served on a committee, worked in a political campaign, or chaired an assembly—let alone observed with detachment the progress of real-world political "deliberation."[135] Is it common to find such experiences satisfying, or is one not more often depressed by the pettiness, dogmatism, and—what amounts to the same thing—the endless capacity for self-delusion on display in politics?

There may be no "nonpolitical" way of reaching decisions that would exempt them from human frailties. But if the question is whether there are ways of maximizing the satisfactions and minimizing the frustrations of political life, surely impersonal forms of political decisionmaking might be less hospitable to some of the worst human tendencies. If there are any general arguments to be made for allowing a broad scope to market decisions, their priv-

atistic character might be one. For while irrationality may well influence decisions about what to buy as much as decisions about how to vote, private irrationality is less tiresome than the public variety.

The problems with Beiner's view are neatly summarized by his reaction to an essay by Charles Krauthammer praising "indifference to politics," especially by the young, on the grounds that political indifference "leaves all the more room for the things that really count: science, art, religion, family, play."[136] Far from being a statement of "the pure liberal doctrine of citizenship," as Beiner contends,[137] Krauthammer's position *is* purely substantive: it displays no formalistic reliance on the priority of choice over the good, or on individual rights. It does not culminate in value relativism. Whether or not one agrees with Krauthammer's conclusion, one must admit that it is a model of substantive judgment of exactly the sort Beiner might be expected to applaud.

Against Krauthammer's discussion of the good, Beiner derives, from the "apocalyptic potential" of modern state power, the thesis that "citizenship that is more than formal membership is not a privilege but a moral necessity."[138] This is a non sequitur. Even if citizenship could make a difference—and a desirable one—in modern politics, surely not even Beiner would want us to devote our entire lives to it. So it seems fitting to weigh citizenship against such goods as the ones Krauthammer lists. This cuts two ways. First, Beiner misses an opportunity to explore Krauthammer's picture of intellect, beauty, spirituality, love, and play as constituents of the good life, and to investigate their political, cultural, and social prerequisites. Second, he fails to consider how citizenship and socialism fit—or fail to fit—into such a life. If we are to move beyond formalism, then Beiner's and Taylor's reservations about consumerism need to be translated into nonformalist claims, empirically investigated, balanced against the alternatives, and supplemented by considering the effects of what may be an inherently ugly, untruthful, and unsatisfying sector of society—democratic politics, and its concomitant, bureaucracy[139]—on the texture of everyday life. Otherwise their preoccupation with "controlling our fate" remains but a collectivized version of individualist libertarianism.

*Communitarianism or Nationalism?* .

Nonformalist political theorists would draw on empirical political science, political and personal psychology, cultural anthropology, history, art history, sociology, evolutionary biology, and economics to discern the limits and possibilities of attaining whatever goods they proposed.[140] All of this will be part of the agenda of CRITICAL REVIEW.

An important part of it, almost certainly, will be a consideration of what is slighted or only derivatively treated by modern communitarians: the contribution of actual, lived communities to our well-being. This will surely involve questions of the size of good communities. Communitarians frequently advocate a decentralization of political power, but always as a way of promoting civic or Thomistic virtues, which are, in turn, desired for their emancipatory effects. A more substantive version of communitarianism might consider whether the size and even the power of political communities could be limited so that they less often destroy neighborhoods through eminent domain, highway subsidization, homogenizing and deadening building codes and zoning laws, and policies—such as drug prohibition—that contribute to crime. Conversely, communitarian defenders of capitalism should have to consider the destructive side-effects of economic and social mobility. If such substantive ends as beauty and happiness become the subject of political theory, we can begin to evaluate which forms of community are conducive to psychologically fulfilling and even aesthetically pleasing interpersonal relationships and environments.[141]

By contrast, MacIntyre's call for "local forms of community" is a counsel of despair about any other way of sustaining "the intellectual and moral life" under current conditions—sustaining, in other words, the life of freedom to choose among primary values.[142] There are, as noted, moments in which Taylor suggests a commitment to specific primary values and to local communities as a means to them, but it is difficult to see how these moments fit into a political theory in which the highest good is the freedom to choose goods, individually and collectively.[143] Walzer's careful attention to the conditions of life in the marketplace, workplace, office, school, and home is invariably directed toward discerning social understandings that require egalitarian distributions of

power and resources—although his work is replete, as is that of MacIntyre and Taylor, with policy suggestions that could be argued on substantively communitarian grounds.[144] Sandel writes that communitarians are "troubled by the tendency of liberal programs to displace politics from smaller forms of association to more comprehensive ones," but this concern stems from their desire to encourage "those intermediate forms of community that have at times sustained a more vital public life."[145]

Beiner points out that communitarianism is often inaccurately perceived as extolling "the raptures of *Gemeinschaft*";[146] one might, however, view *Gemeinschaft* communitarianism as at least offering a starting point for substantively discussing the relationship between community and the human good, compared to the formalistic versions of communitarianism we have examined. The danger Beiner sees in *Gemeinschaft* communitarianism is its tendency to legitimize nationalism. But ironically, the civic republicanism he shares with the other communitarians may best be seen as marking the accommodation of elements of the left with one of its traditional enemies, the nation-state,. having recognized that it is within the confines of that state that elements of socialism have been, and can be, instituted. The marginality of the communitarians' interest in small-scale communities is demonstrated by their eagerness to locate political power in the national state, which is explicit in all four of our theorists.[147]

If the substantive effects of community do not motivate contemporary communitarianism, what does? Whether they essentially wish to build on contemporary welfare states, as do Taylor and Sandel, or make more radical anticapitalist departures, as do Walzer and MacIntyre (and Beiner), the "communities" to which communitarians would direct our loyalties are states that do or can, in theory, effect equal individual freedom; but communitarians recognize that the glue that holds such states together is particularistic— which is to say, nationalistic. We have seen that the communitarians' modifications of particularism invariably assure that the communities legitimized by their theories are animated by egalitarian, libertarian traditions. If successful, communitarianism would render equality and liberty valuable when confined to an exclusive nation. Walzer devotes an entire chapter of *Spheres of Justice* to the right of a community to exclude outsiders from membership, including employment and the receipt of welfare benefits.[148] Such

exclusions of "outsiders" contradict the universalistic foundation on which socialism traditionally rested and arguably must rest. By breaking with internationalism, communitarians achieve a degree of political realism barred to liberals, who must elide the particularist nature of modern politics. It is not the good that communitarianism legitimizes, but the exclusivistic state.

Considered as a possible element in human well-being, *Gemeinschaft* could be balanced against other elements and, because it can be so destructive, cordoned off from state power. But as the prerequisite for freedom and equality — which communitarians see as the highest goods — particularism becomes virtually an end in itself, and its link to the state indispensable. Thus, for example, in moving from an instrumental to an intrinsic rationale for devotion to the autonomy-conferring democratic state, Taylor makes the empirical observation that some goods, such as the feeling of unity expressed in a concert ovation, are inherently collective.[149] Because he is antecedently convinced that democracies are intrinsically valuable, Taylor does not take his observation seriously enough to ask empirical questions about it: e.g., Is democracy truly as pleasurable as a concert? Might not, say, fascism be more likely than democracy to lead to collective goods of this sort? For regardless of the answers to such questions, Taylor is constrained to endorse whatever he adjudges the preconditions of the free state to be. And, sharing in the realism of the other communitarians, he recognizes that particularism is one of these preconditions.

By contrast, openly evaluating *Gemeinschaft* in light of first-order ends such as happiness might allow us to find ways to indulge particularistic sentiments safely, perhaps by depoliticizing them; and if not, it would compel us to repudiate them. It is far from evident whether we can say the same of a politics that confers intrinsic value on particularistic states. While the communitarians would strenuously oppose the use of their doctrines to support unfree polities, their own need to modify particularism indicates the dangers attendant on making it a criterion of political legitimacy.

NOTES

1. On Unger's liberalism see Will Kymlicka, "Communitarianism, Liberalism, and Superliberalism," CRITICAL REVIEW 8, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 263–84.

2. See, for instance, David Miller, "F. A. Hayek: Dogmatic Skeptic," *Dissent*, Summer 1994: 346–53, at 352.

3. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

4. Robert Nisbet, *The Twilight of Authority* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 287.

5. Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in idem, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 188.

6. Idem, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 517; on theism, 518, 342.

7. See especially, in addition to "Atomism," idem, "Alternative Futures: Legitimacy, Identity and Alienation in Late Twentieth Century Canada," in Alan Cairns and Cynthia Williams, research coordinators, *Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Society in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 202; Charles Taylor, "Legitimation Crisis?" in idem, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*; and idem, *Sources of the Self*, 505.

8. See n5 above.

9. Taylor, "Atomism," 191.

10. Ibid., 192.

11. Ibid., 194.

12. Ibid., 209.

13. Ibid., 198, 205.

14. Ibid., 197.

15. Ibid., 198.

16. Ibid., 200.

17. Ibid., 188.

18. Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), chs. 7–14. In Charles Taylor, "Can Liberalism Be Communitarian?" CRITICAL REVIEW 8, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 257–62, Taylor maintains that (1) Kymlicka is not a communitarian because he does not recognize the intrinsic value of particular communities, and thus could not justify coercive measures in their defense; and that (2) Kymlicka's argument is paternalistic because it confines to an instrumentalist role goods that community members think are intrinsically valuable. Both of Taylor's claims appear to vindicate the freedom of a community to pursue whichever ends it deems valuable. They therefore contradict his devotion to the essential value of autonomy.

19. Taylor, "Alternative Futures," 213.

20. Idem, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in Nancy Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 165.

21. Idem, "Alternative Futures," 213.

22. Idem, "Cross-Purposes," 166.

23. Ibid., 167.

24. Ibid., 160.

25. Ibid., 162. Here Taylor is explicating, and endorsing, Sandel's critique of

Rawls. On the connection between collectivist ontology and the welfare state see Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 505, and idem, "Alternative Futures," 202.

26. Charles Taylor, "Justice after Virtue," in Michael Benedikt and Rudolf Burger, eds., *Kritische Methode und Zukunft der Anthropologie* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumuller, 1985), 36, 38.

27. Taylor, "Cross-Purposes," 163; idem, *Sources of the Self*, 35, 36.

28. Idem, "Justice after Virtue," 41; cf. idem, *Sources of the Self*, 66.

29. Idem, *Sources of the Self*, 39.

30. Idem, "Alternative Futures," 213.

31. Idem, "Cross-Purposes," 166.

32. Ibid., 165.

33. Idem, "Can Liberalism Be Communitarian?" (n18 above), 260.

34. This is true of all the works discussed below: Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); idem, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," in Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit, eds., *Communitarianism and Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and idem, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," in Allan C. Hutchinson and Patrick Monahan, eds., *The Rule of Law: Ideal or Ideology* (Toronto: Carswell, 1987).

35. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 90.

36. Nozick, 228.

37. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 79.

38. Idem, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," 28.

39. Idem, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 100.

40. Ibid., 80.

41. Ibid., 144, 143.

42. Idem, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 89.

43. Idem, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 143.

44. Idem, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 96.

45. Taylor, "Cross-Purposes," 162.

46. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 93.

47. Idem, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 180.

48. Or so I argue in Jeffrey Friedman, "The New Consensus: II. The Democratic Welfare State," CRITICAL REVIEW 4, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 633–708, at 639–42; idem, "After Libertarianism: Rejoinder to Narveson, McCloskey, Flew, and Machan," CRITICAL REVIEW 6, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 113–52, at 126–34; and idem, "Truth and Liberation: Rejoinder to Brooks, Sassower and Agassi, and Harris," CRITICAL REVIEW 8, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 137–57, at 137–43.

49. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 180.

50. Idem, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 91.

51. Ibid., 90; Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 144.

52. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 90–91. Here

Sandel is explicating and endorsing MacIntyre, as Taylor explicated and endorsed Sandel (n25 above).

53. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 5, emph. added.

54. Ibid., 18–19.

55. Ibid., 12.

56. Idem, "Interpretation and Social Criticism," in Sterling M. McMurrin, ed., *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 16, 17.

57. Ibid., 16.

58. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, xvii.

59. Ibid., 20.

60. Ian Shapiro, *Political Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 85.

61. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 28. Ronald Dworkin criticizes Walzer on similar grounds in "To Each His Own," *New York Review of Books*, April 14, 1983: 5.

62. Shapiro, 84.

63. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, xiv.

64. Ibid., 313, emph. added.

65. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

66. Ibid., 8.

67. Ibid., 18–19.

68. Ibid., 126.

69. Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 354.

70. Idem, *After Virtue*, 148.

71. Ibid., 140.

72. The reason MacIntyre cannot accept Aristotle's "metaphysical biology"—by which MacIntyre seems to mean Aristotle's claim that the ultimate human end is to contemplate the metaphysically permanent, i.e., the divine—is that a contemplative view of the human essence conflicts with "Aristotle's view of man as essentially political." Ibid., 158.

73. Ibid., 150.

74. Ibid., 151.

75. Ibid., 150.

76. Ibid., 151.

77. Ibid., 202, 190–91.

78. Ibid., 190.

79. Ibid., 201, 163.

80. Ibid., 201, emph. original.

81. Ibid., 176.

82. Ibid., 223. Cf., *inter alia*, ibid., 221: "insofar as the virtues sustain the relationships required for practices, they have to sustain relationships to

the past—and to the future"; and ibid., 146: "the past, if necessary and if possible, is corrected and transcended, yet corrected and transcended in a way that leaves the present open to being in turn corrected and transcended by some yet more adequate future point of view."

83. Ibid., 221, emph. original.

84. Ibid., 201, 219.

85. Ibid., 221, 222.

86. Ibid., 126–27.

87. Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 354–55.

88. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 57.

89. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 220, 222, emph. added.

90. Ibid., 221.

91. Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 350.

92. Idem, *After Virtue*, 32.

93. I will present a more thorough treatment of MacIntyre's intellectual evolution in *The Politics of Communitarianism*, forthcoming.

94. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism: An Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1953); idem, "The Logical Status of Religious Belief," in idem, ed., *Metaphysical Beliefs: Three Essays* (London: SCM Press, 1957).

95. Idem, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness—II," *The New Reasoner*, no. 8 (Spring 1959): 89–98, at 90.

96. Ibid., 98.

97. Idem, "Breaking the Chains of Reason," in E. P. Thompson, ed., *Out of Apathy* (London: Stevens and Sons, 1960), 195–240.

98. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Secularization and Moral Change* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967 [1964]), 54.

99. Idem, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

100. Idem, *Herbert Marcuse: An Exposition and a Polemic* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 72.

101. Prefigurations of the provisos are to be found in idem, "Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution," *Comparative Politics* 5, no. 3 (April 1973): 321–42; idem, "The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts," *Ethics* 84, no. 1 (October 1973): 1–9; and idem, "Social Science Methodology as the Ideology of Bureaucratic Authority" (1975), in Maria J. Falco, ed., *Through the Looking-Glass: Epistemology and the Conduct of Inquiry, an Anthology* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979).

102. E.g., Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 91.

103. Idem, *After Virtue*, 159, 229.

104. Idem, "Rights, Practices, and Marxism: Reply to Six Critics," *Analyse & Kritik* 7 (1985): 234–48.

105. On manipulation: idem, *After Virtue*, 23, 24, 30, 68, 74, 104; idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 86; idem, "Community, Law, and the Idiom and Rhetoric of Rights," *Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 96–110. On social rationality: idem, "The Intelligibility of

Action," in J. Margolis, M. Krausz, and R. M. Burian, eds., *Rationality, Relativism and the Human Sciences* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986), 72; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 396.

106. Idem, *After Virtue*, 228; idem, "Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution," 341–42; idem, "Social Science Methodology as the Ideology of Bureaucratic Authority," 57.

107. Idem, "Rights, Practices, and Marxism," 245.; cf. idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 112.

108. Idem, "How to Seem Virtuous without Actually Being So" (Lancaster: Centre for the Study of Cultural Values, Lancaster University, Occasional Paper No. 1), 15.

109. Idem, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 199–200; cf. idem, "How Moral Education Came to Find Its Place in the Schools," in National Humanities Center Working Paper #1, *Ethics and Moral Education* (Research Triangle Park, N.C.: National Humanities Center, November 1980), 3; idem, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 164.

110. Idem, *After Virtue*, 221.

111. Ibid., 159.

112. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 86.

113. Ronald Beiner, *What's the Matter with Liberalism?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 31.

114. MacIntyre, "Community, Law, and the Idiom and Rhetoric of Rights," 99, emph. added.

115. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 180.

116. On the Austrian acceptance of neoclassical assumptions about pregiven preferences, see David L. Prytchitko, "Formalism in Austrian-School Welfare Economics: Another Pretense of Knowledge?" CRITICAL REVIEW 7, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 567–92.

117. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 86.

118. Perhaps such considerations could be added to those adduced by Peter Simpson for a "neutral" state in "Liberalism, State, and Community," CRITICAL REVIEW 8, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 159–73.

119. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 198, 190.

120. Taylor, "Alternative Futures," 197, quoting E. F. Schumacher.

121. Ibid., 197, 200.

122. Ibid., 208.

123. Beiner, 7.

124. Ibid., 22.

125. Ibid., 25.

126. Ibid., 28, 29.

127. Ibid., 48, 33, 27 (emph. changed), 27, 105.

128. Ibid., 168, 153.

129. Ibid., 31.

130. Ibid., 151, 147.

131. Ibid., 114.

132. Ibid., 106–107, quoting Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 260–61.

133. Beiner, 144–45.

134. Ibid., 118.

135. Ibid., 133.

136. Quoted in ibid., 128–29.

137. Ibid., 128.

138. Ibid., 130.

139. James Q. Wilson suggests that bureaucratization—in the sense of "red tape"—is encouraged by the needs of democracies to "constrain" the conduct of their agencies: *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

140. An initial moment of radical choice between primary values, at least in order to place them in a hierarchy, is in this view inevitable; but unlike formalist theories, there is no implication that whatever goods are chosen are good *by virtue of being chosen by a preferred authority*, whether that authority is the individual or the community. The theorist posits as axiomatically good, say: truth over falsehood, beauty over ugliness, happiness over misery—perhaps after, or in the course of, historical genealogies of the contingent sources of such ideals and their definitions. There is no passing the moral buck to the community, the individual, or the Supreme Being.

141. Cf., e.g., James Hudson, "Individual and Community: Charles Murray's Political Philosophy, CRITICAL REVIEW 8, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 175–216.

142. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 263.

143. See, e.g., Taylor's distinction between the "experiential" and the "public" aspects of his understanding of modernity, of which only the latter seem to have political consequences: *Sources of the Self*, 502.

144. E.g. Walzer's discussion of publicly enforced holidays, which suggests the *goodness* of days that were "full of obligation but also of celebration, full of things to do, feasting and dancing, rituals and plays." *Spheres of Justice*, 194.

145. Sandel, "The Political Theory of the Procedural Republic," 91.

146. Beiner, 33.

147. See, e.g., Taylor, "Cross-Purposes," 166, *Sources of the Self*, 503; Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," 26–28; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Is Patriotism a Virtue?* (Lawrence: Department of Philosophy, University of Kansas), 1984, esp. 19 on the needs of "a large-scale modern polity."

148. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, ch. 2. See also Taylor, "Justice after Virtue," 45.

149. Taylor, "Cross-Purposes," 169.