MARXISM, ETHICS and POLITICS

The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre

JOHN GREGSON

Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

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ISSN 2524-7123 ISSN 2524-7131 (electronic)
Marx, Engels, and Marxisms
ISBN 978-3-030-03370-5 ISBN 978-3-030-03371-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018960498

Cover illustration: Ivan Vdovin/Alamy Stock Photo

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Esme

Series Foreword

The Marx Revival

The Marx renaissance is underway on a global scale. Whether the puzzle is the economic boom in China or the economic bust in 'the West', there is no doubt that Marx appears regularly in the media nowadays as a guru, and not a threat, as he used to be. The literature dealing with Marxism, which all but dried up twenty-five years ago, is reviving in the global context. Academic and popular journals and even newspapers and on-line journalism are increasingly open to contributions on Marxism, just as there are now many international conferences, university courses and seminars on related themes. In all parts of the world, leading daily and weekly papers are featuring the contemporary relevance of Marx's thought. From Latin America to Europe, and wherever the critique to capitalism is remerging, there is an intellectual and political demand for a new critical encounter with Marxism.

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The series will include titles focusing on the *oeuvre* of Marx and Engels which utilize the scholarly achievements of the on-going *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, a project that has strongly revivified the research on these two authors in the past decade.

Critical Studies on Marxisms
Volumes will awaken readers to the overarching issues and world-changing encounters that shelter within the broad categorization 'Marxist'. Particular attention will be given to authors such as Gramsci and Benjamin, who are very popular and widely translated nowadays all over the world, but also to authors who are less known in the English-speaking countries, such as Mariátegui.

Reception Studies and Marxist National Traditions
Political projects have necessarily required oversimplifications in the twentieth century, and Marx and Engels have found themselves 'made over' numerous times and in quite contradictory ways. Taking a national perspective on 'reception' will be a global revelation and the volumes of this series will enable the worldwide Anglophone community to understand the variety of intellectual and political traditions through which Marx and Engels have been received in local contexts.

Titles Published

1. Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank, *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts*, 2014.
2. Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank, *Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts*, 2014.
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11. Xavier LaFrance and Charles Post (Eds.), *Case Studies in the Origins of Capitalism*.

Titles Forthcoming

Vladimir Puzone and Luis Felipe Miguel (Eds.), *The Brazilian Left in the 21st Century: Conflict and Conciliation in Peripheral Capitalism*.
John Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics, and Politics: The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*.
Kaan Kangal, *Friedrich Engels and the* Dialectics of Nature.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the Marxists Internet Archive and all their volunteers in making so much invaluable, otherwise difficult to find, material available for free. Similarly, thanks must go to the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust for making all the issues of *The New Reasoner* available online and accessible to all. I greatly appreciate the support of friends and colleagues of ISME (The International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry), in particular their annual conferences which are interesting and illuminating, generating much lively discussion and debate. ISME is a great example of people coming together from many different disciplinary backgrounds and learning with and from each other. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their continuing love and support, and especially Beth, for everything.

Contents

Abbreviations

ASHOE	A Short History of Ethics
AV	After Virtue
BCR	Breaking the Chains of Reason
CPGB	Communist Part of Great Britain
FaR	Freedom and Revolution
HCC	History and Class Consciousness
IS	International Socialism
M: AI	Marxism: An Interpretation
MaC	Marxism and Christianity
NFTMR	Notes from the Moral Wilderness
NR	New Reasoner
SLL	Socialist Labour League
ToF	Theses on Feuerbach
TToF: TRNT	The Theses on Feuerbach: The Road Not Taken

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Alasdair MacIntyre ended his 1981 masterwork *After Virtue* with the following, now somewhat infamous, conclusion:

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

After Virtue is a rich, complex and controversial work. The philosopher John Dunn remarked of MacIntyre in a contemporary review: 'Only a moral philosopher singularly unconcerned at the risk of making a fool of himself could have written *After Virtue*'. This was qualified through Dunn's assertion that MacIntyre is:

> … the most stirring and the most imaginatively challenging writer on moral and political issues in the English language. *After Virtue* shows … the rewards of a lifetime of intellectual courage. (Dunn 1981)

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_1

The virtue of intellectual courage is one, I would agree, that is central to any reasonable interpretation of MacIntyre's intellectual history. MacIntyre has always been one to ask the difficult questions and to be prepared to look elsewhere if he does not like the answers he gets. Yet this intellectual courage is not always interpreted in quite such a positive manner. MacIntyre is often regarded, not without a little hostility, as an intellectual chameleon, or worse. Ernest Gellner once said 'what distinguishes Professor MacIntyre is not the number of beliefs he has doubted, but the number of beliefs he has embraced' (Gellner in Horton and Mendus 1994, p. 1). With undeniable venom he has been targeted for his 'virulent philistinism', of having 'occupied nearly every conceivable political and intellectual position' without ever having 'really understood any of them' (Blackburn 1970, p. 11). One could point to any number of other disparaging remarks from figures such as Tariq Ali and Perry Anderson, and many others besides. It is not difficult to work out that much of the hostility to MacIntyre has come from those on the left. Why is this so? I would suggest there are at least three reasons for this.

Firstly, MacIntyre made some admittedly dubious publishing decisions during the early part of his career, deciding to contribute to journals that were allegedly sponsored by organizations such as the C.I.A. (Blackledge and Davidson 2008b). Secondly, and perhaps rather unfairly, MacIntyre gained a reputation for specializing in 'hatchet-jobs' against various respected figures of the left. Certainly, if one reads 1970's *Marcuse* there is an undeniably forceful tone to the critique, with the titular subject described as having 'a taste for pretentious nostrums described in inflated language' (MacIntyre 1970, p. 86). Yet elsewhere MacIntyre has engaged positively with Marcuse which his critics tend to forget or choose to ignore. Similarly, while MacIntyre has been critical of figures such as Dunayevskaya, Wright Mills, Deutscher, Gellner himself, to name a few, he has always also been complimentary too and relatively fair and consistent in his assessments. What has probably caused the most ire from the left against MacIntyre, is the fact that he came to completely reject Marxism as a political practice after being, for a time in the 1950s and 1960s, one of its most eloquent and significant exponents. MacIntyre moved, within a decade, from being deeply involved in both the new left and revolutionary Marxist organizations, to a complete withdrawal from active politics in Britain and relocation to various professorial posts in America. The publication of AV, a decade after his move to the States thus failed, for the most part, to interest any of his former

comrades on the left. This was not only because of MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism in practice but also because there was almost nothing of Marxism contained within AV. Indeed, it is unsurprising, on a superficial reading of AV, that few were aware of the body of work within Marxism that MacIntyre had left behind. Those who did engage with AV therefore tended to be unaware of his Marxist past, saw it as irrelevant, or were most likely put off by the seemingly pessimistic political conclusions that AV ended with.

Yet AV is certainly not the work of a political ultra-pessimist, although it is not difficult to see why it has been made out to be so, nor why it would not sit very easily with those on the Marxist left. One Marxist critic, who nevertheless retained much admiration for MacIntyre, commented on MacIntyre's political trajectory since leaving Marxism:

> It all reads to me like a call for hippie communes without hippies. If MacIntyre means by "morality" what he used to mean by it, such communities cannot be a moral response to what the system is doing to humanity in the twenty-first century. (Harman 2009)

Another, this time from outside the Marxist tradition, saw the exclusionary implications of MacIntyre's politics sounding like a call that 'those of us who are clever and prosperous' should 'foregather with groups of like-minded friends to cultivate our own gardens, while the weeds grow and the litter collects in the public places' (Schneewind 1982, pp. 662–663). Yet the conclusion that MacIntyre builds to, already present in AV but fleshed out more since and made clear in the third edition, is that we need not a retreat from, but a new kind of engagement with, the social order (MacIntyre 2007, p.xvi). This new kind of engagement is nevertheless on a qualitatively different scale from that envisaged by Marxism. The call for constructions of local communities that might foster the virtuous life is hardly in the traditional Marxist revolutionary spirit—gone is the belief in a full-scale, revolutionary transformation of society. Indeed, the contrast between the Marxist MacIntyre and the contemporary MacIntyre is a stark one. MacIntyre's early Marxist essays are stamped with an unmistakable political optimism, despite his relationship with Marxism never being an uncritical one. *Notes from the Moral Wilderness* and numerous contemporary essays have this quality to them. Yet, within a few years, a growing pessimism was becoming much more evident in MacIntyre's work. So while still retaining much from Marxism,

MacIntyre was eventually to argue in 1991 that 'Marxism is not just an inadequate, but a largely inept, instrument for social analysis' (MacIntyre 1991a, p. 258). This suggests, significantly, that MacIntyre's critique goes well beyond its perceived political inadequacies. This is indeed the case. MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism encompasses both its political and philosophical failings, as intertwined as they are.

MacIntyre, in both his Marxist past and Thomistic-Aristotelian present, has arguably been at his strongest in his 'negative', critical approach to ethics and politics. That is to say, from the 1950s until the present day, MacIntyre has succeeded in brilliantly deconstructing, firstly, the moral perspectives of the liberal critic of Stalinism and his flipside the Stalinist, then, in generalizing this perspective, the metatheories of the enlightenment and modernity itself. Anyone that reads *A Short History of Ethics* or AV will surely recognize this often brilliantly incisive and insightful aspect of his work. What is arguably more problematic in MacIntyre is the potential solutions that he has historically posited to these moral dilemmas and the problem of ethics more generally. This is not necessarily a weakness (MacIntyre's reply—at least in his mature thought—would be along the lines of there are no solutions), yet it does entail that there is something of a lacuna in his work, either a vagueness or a sense of pessimism—the former which perhaps best characterized his early, Marxist approach to ethics and the latter his contemporary position as a post-Marxist. It is beyond the scope of this book to assess MacIntyre's post-Marxism, although I do point to some of the contemporary debates and contestations in the closing chapter. My aim is rather more limited in that I seek to provide some level of understanding of how MacIntyre began and developed his first ethical project from within the resources of Marxism and on what grounds he eventually came to abandon it. If one goes straight from the optimism of an early essay such as NFTMW, to the seemingly gloomy predictions of AV, one would be forgiven, at first glance, for wondering if they were written by the same person.

It would be easy therefore to present MacIntyre as an intellectual chameleon, incessantly changing his mind and politics, hopping from one philosophical and political framework to another. He is clearly not a Marxist anymore. He has moved from Marx, to Aristotle, to an Aristotelian-Thomism, through Anglicanism, to Atheism and then to Catholicism. Yet if we return to the virtue of intellectual courage, I would suggest that what defines MacIntyre as a rare kind of philosopher is his unswerving willingness to put not only the views of others but, more

importantly, his own views into question. Most inhabit more or less the same tradition throughout their lives, yet MacIntyre has always been prepared to tear up the script if he comes to believe it is not right. MacIntyre himself suggests he has traversed through three intellectual periods in his life. Firstly, the period prior to 1971 (nearly twenty years of work), MacIntyre says, is an essentially fragmented and messy period of enquiry in his intellectual history. Secondly, from 1971 to 1977 he describes as a period of 'sometimes painfully self-critical reflection' and, thirdly, from 1977, the contemporary project that he continues to develop (MacIntyre 1991b, p. 268). This does not mean that these three periods are separate, or indeed separable, as there are key themes and views that have remained quite central throughout the entirety of MacIntyre's career. It is one aim of this book to try to draw some of these key themes and commitments that have remained central to MacIntyre together.

This means that an analysis of one such aspect of MacIntyre's thought, in this case Marxism, must necessarily encompass each of these periods to a certain degree. The first three chapters of this book explore MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism during the period when he was closest to Marxism. Indeed, from his early engagements with both Marxism and Christianity, MacIntyre would become one of the leading figures, I would argue, both in the New Left and in the revolutionary Marxist parties that he inhabited during this time. Through examining MacIntyre's own work, the debates with and influence of other Marxists, and the wider political context, I aim to provide a reasonably clear picture of MacIntyre's Marxism during this period. These chapters also provide an understanding of not only what MacIntyre took from Marx, but what he came to see as being increasingly problematic. MacIntyre's relationship with Marx and Marxism was never uncritical, as anyone familiar with his work would expect, and the foundations of his rejection of Marxism were already, to an extent, developing in his Marxist period.

It would be inaccurate to paint a picture of MacIntyre simply as an intellectual chameleon, albeit one with the courage to follow through on his changing political convictions. As others have noted, there are key areas in which MacIntyre has displayed significant continuity in his thought. The understanding of the relationship of philosophy to practice and the inadequacies of most moral philosophy, the critique of modern liberal capitalism and the necessity for developing an ethical revolutionary alternative form of social practice, all remain relatively

consistent throughout MacIntyre's intellectual genesis, as I shall aim to highlight. Indeed, it could be argued that, certainly ethically and politically, MacIntyre's commitments have, at least in some ways, not changed. What has certainly changed is the framework, the political and philosophical vehicle through which MacIntyre's ethical and political vision might best be delivered. So while the politics that the contemporary MacIntyre advocates is radically different in terms of scope and possibility from Marxism, what have not changed are the values that underpin them. A central aim here will be to identify and discuss those influences and commitments that remain of great significance to MacIntyre developing, as they often did, from within the resources of Marxism.

Yet reject Marxism MacIntyre did, at least as a viable ethical, political practice. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there are significant works that signal the reasons that would eventually see MacIntyre discard Marxism, however incompletely. It is unfortunate that the contemporary MacIntyre has not brought together a comprehensive work that deals with this rejection (although perhaps *Marxism and Christianity* comes closest to this). Nevertheless, the comprehensive rejection is there, if not always readily apparent. The brief critique of Marxism that MacIntyre gives in AV remains the best summary of MacIntyre's critique of Marxism (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 261–262). Chapter 5 aims to develop and expand this five-point critique in order to give a clearer picture of why MacIntyre sees Marxism as inadequate to the modern world. This is quite a wide-ranging critique that is at once political and philosophical. Broadly, MacIntyre's argument is that Marxism fails to break from the inadequate moral frameworks of liberal modernity, both in theory and practice therefore, like liberal modernity itself, is unable to be morally coherent or politically relevant. Marxism, despite its best efforts suggests MacIntyre, tends to slip into inadequate modes of moral reasoning that are Kantian or utilitarian in form. Due to the conditions of what MacIntyre calls 'moral impoverishment', Marxism is unable to provide any justification as to how people might come to desire socialism. The 'problem of informed desire' is central to this chapter. In such conditions of moral impoverishment, Marxism is apt to reproduce the manipulative social relations that MacIntyre argues characterizes all moral reasoning within modernity. As Marxists move toward power, argues MacIntyre, they necessarily become Weberian and find nothing but the Nietzschean will to power at their moral foundations.

Change and continuity, at the risk of stating the obvious, are therefore both central themes to any account of MacIntyre's Marxism. This can probably partially explain why there have been quite different interpretations of MacIntyre's intellectual career—it largely depends on whether one emphasizes the continuity of the central concerns or the changing political vehicle through which they might be delivered. Hence, Knight emphasizes the former, arguing there has always been 'one and the same' MacIntyre (Knight 2007, p. 222), while Blackledge argues, reflecting on his Marxist period, that there was once 'another MacIntyre' only 'dimly visible' on the pages of AV (Blackledge 2005, p. 696). It is these elements of complexity and contradiction, doubt and conviction, that make MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism so fascinating and, I would argue, valuable. The value, at least in part, develops as a result of the difficult, even tortuous, grappling with Marxism that was a central feature of MacIntyre's thought in the 1950s and into the 1960s, reflected in his writings in often very different kinds of journals in this period.

Particularly telling was MacIntyre's attempt to maintain a political commitment to a revolutionary socialist organization while simultaneously holding an increasingly strong belief in the ethical and political inadequacies of such organizations. MacIntyre, of course, came to abandon this political commitment, but this was not done lightly. His writings during this period are indelibly inked with signs of this quandary that he increasingly finds himself in. This quandary provides two key reasons as to why MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism is so important. Firstly, both his continued commitment to certain aspects of Marxism, as well as his rejection of other aspects, largely shape the nature of his contemporary 'revolutionary Aristotelianism' (Knight 2007). The contemporary politics of local community is influenced in no small part by MacIntyre's view that Marxism is wholly inadequate in how it understands and approaches the issue of the modern state. One cannot adequately comprehend MacIntyre's contemporary politics without understanding this engagement with Marxism. MacIntyre's political solutions—if solution is indeed the right word—might seem extreme, bizarre even, unless one comprehends the full extent of his claims about the nature of late modernity. Secondly, in attempting to develop an ethical account of revolutionary practice from within the resources of Marxism—even though ultimately 'doomed to failure'—the resulting attempts remain of great value in themselves (MacIntyre 2011, p. 176). For any Marxist, or anyone sympathetic to Marxism, his work within the new Left and the SLL are among some of the best of the period.

What also makes MacIntyre quite fascinating, I would suggest, is the way that he builds his arguments. There is something of Pasternak in MacIntyre or, more accurately, in MacIntyre's own conception of Pasternak:

> Pasternak treats his characters like the cast of a play, or rather like the dancers in a formal masque. He brings them together and separates them again and again, and their coincidental re-encounters are a necessary part of his technique. (MacIntyre 1959, p. 74)

If not in substance, then certainly in style, this is a technique that MacIntyre himself has used regularly. Sedgwick, in his insightful review of AV, notes the 'parade' of characters that MacIntyre develops to illustrate and bolster his arguments—the liberal, the Stalinist, the manager, the therapist, all play their part in the MacIntyrean parade of moral characters (Sedgwick 1982). As we shall see, some of his earlier Marxist works, particularly NFTMW, use this method to great effect. These characters, and variations on them, continually reoccur throughout MacIntyre's intellectual history. Yet this would be a very one-sided evaluation of such a technique if it were to imply that MacIntyre only used characters such as these in the abstract. For another of MacIntyre's great strengths is the ability to concretize his philosophical arguments through examining the lives of those who have lived the virtuous—or not so virtuous—life. These are characters, but they are real characters. Again, the list here is numerous. The liberal critic and the Stalinist of NFTMW retain their power because they were real historical responses to the tumult of 1956 and its aftermath. MacIntyre's greatness here was that he captured the problematic essence of not only the worst, but the best, socialists who were responding to Stalinism. Recent examples of specific individuals include his book on one such exemplary, Edith Stein, the Marxist Georg Lukács, as well as those lives he traces toward the end of 2016's *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*. This is one of the factors that makes MacIntyre so compelling to read—his insistence that philosophy and practice are not separated, or separable, disciplines of academia.

MacIntyre published his first book, *Marxism: An Interpretation* when he was 24 years old, this is largely the subject of the second chapter. It is a fascinating work that gives an insight into both what it was that MacIntyre admired in Marxism and what he found troubling. Present here are some of the key themes that would remain central throughout

his intellectual genesis. His *Theses on Feuerbach*-inspired admiration for Marx's ideas of revolutionary practice, self-determination and the relationship of theory to practice all make their first, published appearances. So too, significantly, do the problems of dogma and determinism that would remain central to MacIntyre's critique of Marxism. Chapter 3 examines MacIntyre's time in the first British New Left, in particular the contribution to the debates on socialist humanism that he made in that 'most remarkable journal' (MacIntyre 2007, p. xvii), *The New Reasoner*. Here, MacIntyre would not only write some of his most significant contributions to Marxism and ethics, he also began to build his critique of liberalism and what he understood as its wholly inadequate ethics. Similarly, in NFTMW and other contemporary essays, MacIntyre would reflect on the relationship of morality to desire, the nature of moral reasoning, and what an adequate understanding of human action entailed.

Chapter 4 examines MacIntyre's time in two revolutionary Marxist organizations, the Socialist Labour League and, following this, the International Socialists. This is probably MacIntyre's least-known political and intellectual period, although not quite as unknown as it once was, thanks to some significant recent republications of MacIntyre's work during these years (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a). Yet this is not a period that is of interest only to those of a particularly Marxist persuasion I would suggest. A number of contributions here are not only fascinating in their own right, they are also important in furthering our understanding of MacIntyre's contemporary work. For a short time when MacIntyre was involved in both the New Left and the SLL, he was at his most politically optimistic. This would not last long though, as evidenced in the highly critical position he adopted toward Marxism in works such as *Marxism and Christianity* and *Marcuse*, which bring this chapter to a close.

The rejection of Marxism, at least as a political practice, had come long before the publication of AV. Yet the critique of AV displays, however briefly, the essence of MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism which is why it takes a central place in the book. What I hope will become clear, along the way, is a picture of MacIntyre as a Marxist and as a critic of Marxism, though never to the extent where the latter precludes all influence of the former. AV and the works that have followed are impressive, yet so is MacIntyre's Marxist work. This is why I would suggest that it is from both the Marxist and the post-Marxist MacIntyre that anyone with an interest in radical philosophy and politics can learn.

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CHAPTER 2

Marxism and Christianity

The complex and contradictory relationship that began before MacIntyre's engagement with the First New Left was that between Marxism and Christianity. Indeed, M: AI has itself been interpreted as a reflection of MacIntyre's own contradictions, in him being unable to provide any coherent, rational justification for the Christian framework he adopts within it (Lutz 2004, pp. 17–18). This would help to explain why it was that MacIntyre dropped Christianity (before later rediscovering it, albeit in a different form) more quickly than he was able to let go of Marxism. We begin with an initial discussion of these two most significant influences on MacIntyre. The aim here is to draw out some of the key themes and concerns that occupied MacIntyre from the very beginning of his intellectual genesis, as well as to highlight the fundamentally contested nature of MacIntyre's developing, dialectical relationship with Marxism.

Importantly, the 1968 reissue of M: AI under the title *Marxism and Christianity* was very different. It is a great shame that the earlier 1953 edition is much less widely available as it gives a much clearer idea of MacIntyre's assertions of the revolutionary potential he sees within the resources of Marx during this period. This is because MacIntyre saw fit to remove the final two chapters for the new edition, which were the very chapters that made quite clear his commitment to both Christianity and Marx in the 1950s. This led one commentator to remark that the new edition was a 'rather pale' version of the old (Shaw 16:5), while another argued:

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_2

> The book should never have been re-written. Whatever the faults of the original work it had a coherence and relevance deriving from the fact that, although written on a philosophical and religious level, its concerns were ultimately directed towards action. The new work lacks any effective integrating focus and any convincing outcome. (Kuper 1970, p. 35)

This is probably true but it is not surprising. The late 1960s, for MacIntyre, was marked by a political pessimism which precluded the kind of transformative vision that MacIntyre had pointed toward in the early 1950s. The reasons MacIntyre gives for this change is that he states, quite bluntly, that whereas in 1953 he aspired to be both Christian and Marxist, by 1968 he was neither (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xix). The more common 1968 edition therefore develops a much more one-sided, critical view of Marxism which, while being hugely significant in terms of understanding MacIntyre's politics in the late 1960s, diminishes the political commitments that were held by the younger MacIntyre. Interestingly, as we shall see, MacIntyre has rescinded some of the critique he developed of Marxism in 1968. In an introduction to a later edition, MacIntyre stated that because he did not know how to come to terms with the truths he accepted from both Marxism and Christianity, he rejected more than he perhaps should have done in 1968 (MacIntyre 1995a). Importantly, Blackledge and Davidson's edited collection of MacIntyre's early writings (2008) now provides the opportunity for a wider audience to read the original chapters and therefore get a much clearer picture of MacIntyre's Marxist commitments during the early 1950s.

> Marxism is of first-class theological significance as a secularism formed by the gospel which is committed to the problem of power and justice and therefore to themes of redemption and renewal which its history cannot but illuminate. (MacIntyre 1953, p. 18)

> The tragedy of Marxism is that it wished to combine the scope of metaphysics with the certainty of natural sciences. (MacIntyre 1953, p. 71)

Damned with faint praise by one contemporary reviewer for being 'not entirely superfluous' (Richmond 1953, p. 286), M: AI is nevertheless a significant book both for Marxism and Christianity more generally, but more specifically in terms of the development of Macintyre's own relationship to Marxism. It develops preliminary discussion of many, if not

most, of the themes in Marx's thought which MacIntyre both most admired and, conversely, found most problematic. From the very beginning, MacIntyre's relationship with Marxism should be understood as constructively critical. So while, at this stage, MacIntyre was arguing that Marxism provided the best hope of implementing Christian ideas in the modern world (D'Andrea 2006, p. 87), he was simultaneously presenting an account of Marxism's failure on its own terms (Lutz 2004, p. 15). Perhaps for this reason, MacIntyre is generally presented, as Davidson argues, as a commentator on, rather than a practitioner of, Marxism (Davidson 2013, p. 130).

These themes, to which I turn later, remained central to MacIntyre's work in one way or another for the next sixty years or more. Beyond Marxism, but indelibly marked with its imprint, M: AI also contains much broader, but equally constant, beliefs about the proper role of philosophy, the nature of capitalist society, and the inadequacies of social-scientific method in general, to name but a few. These themes would be developed much more throughout the 1950s and 1960s, in the journals of the New Left, through his experiences within revolutionary socialist organizations, as well as within the pages of more traditional, intellectual philosophy journals. I begin by focusing on the way that MacIntyre views and interprets Marx and Marxism at this stage through the lens of Christianity, before moving on to some more general comments about the wider themes developed within this short but hugely significant book.

It is immediately clear in M: AI that MacIntyre has a great deal of admiration for aspects—or perhaps certain truths—of and within both Marxism and Christianity. More significantly, it is also evident that he believes that each can learn something from the other and can correct, potentially, the faults or corruptions that have served to degenerate both. This understanding of both Marxism and Christianity informs MacIntyre's whole approach in M: AI. A key concern for MacIntyre, it seems, is to avoid setting out with the primary purpose to either uphold or refute Marx, as each of these approaches will necessarily fail to grasp Marx's greatness (MacIntyre 1953, p. 5).

MacIntyre believes that both Christianity and Marxism, at their root, are moral doctrines (MacIntyre 1953, p. 58). Part of Marx's greatness comes from giving concrete historical form to a vision of man's alienation, of what he is, and of what he ought to be (MacIntyre 1953, p. 57). Indeed, what draws MacIntyre to Marxism is that it

is the only comparable modern doctrine that has the scope of moral vision put forth by Christianity. Neither The Bible nor Marxism shares Hegel's or Feuerbach's idealist illusions as they both understand that the path to redemption is not found through 'hard-thinking' but through practical activity (MacIntyre 1953, p. 36).

Marxism: An Interpretation is essentially a defense of the humanist and radical cores of Marxism and Religion, as well as a recognition and explanation of the corruption and degeneration of both. It is a story told from Christianity to Marx, through Hegel and then Feuerbach. The key question that emerges for MacIntyre is whether the themes of The Gospel and of Marx can remain relevant, can indeed be rescued, in the light of the twin corruptions of Church and Communism. At this stage, the answer that MacIntyre seems to offer is a guarded 'yes'. What is necessary, argues MacIntyre, is an invigoration of both Christianity and Marxism through a joint commitment to politics and prayer (MacIntyre 1953, p. 122). The scope and radicalness of moral vision shared by the Gospel and Marx were what undoubtedly drew MacIntyre to Christianity and Marxism despite his longstanding recognition of the inadequacies of both. MacIntyre continues to argue, some six decades later, that Marx was one of the philosophers who best understood not only the political but also the moral life (MacIntyre 2016, p. 237). Both Marxism and Christianity provided an antidote to liberalism—to which MacIntyre has always been opposed (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 43), and which individualized conceptions of the good and denied any deeper meaning to life. The radical vision of a society that could overcome alienation, based on a common social humanity, was something that was common to both The Gospel and Marx: As Helder Camara argued:

> when Marx raises the utopia of a human classless society, brotherly and happy, we Christians must not be astonished, because the prophet Isaiah goes even further, foreseeing weapons transformed into ploughs and the lion and the lamb eating together like brothers. (Camara 1978, p. 180)

Yet, unhappily, the unity between this vision and a practical commitment to it had been lost. Nevertheless, what Marxism and Christianity share, at their best, is a unity of thought and of practice in which beliefs about the world serve as a moral imperative to practical commitment within it (McMylor 1994, p. 10). MacIntyre sets out, firstly, to show how Marx's own history developed from a religious-influenced Hegel. Therefore the

paradox in Marxism, suggests MacIntyre, is that while it explicitly denies the 'God-given character of the world' its own foundations lay firmly in religion (MacIntyre 1953, p. 10). This is because the concepts that Marx took from Hegel—the foundations, then, of his own history—are largely developments of Hegel's own religious-influenced background (MacIntyre 1953, p. 23). The three fundamental concepts central to Hegel are 'self-estrangement', 'objectification' and 'coming into one's own'. Each of these has its roots in religion. Self-estrangement describes man in his 'fallen state', objectification refers to man's alienation as recognized by St. Paul, while coming into one's own represents the recognition and overcoming of this alienation, the 'atonement which Jesus brought' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 23). MacIntyre is quick, here, to defend Hegel against those who stigmatize the religious character of his early writings (through an early reference to Lukács) arguing that while his approach is based on religion, his concern from the outset is with history.

MacIntyre identifies Hegel's key historical concern here as explaining the significance of the transition from one religious framework, the Greek, to another, the Christian, specifically in terms of the individualizing of religion and religious commitment. One cannot help but be struck here by the very early parallels between this concern and MacIntyre's own later attempts to explain the individualization of morality from the Greeks to the Enlightenment period. What is most important here, in terms of the role of Marxism, is not the explanation of how this happened but how this individualization manifested itself in an alienated Christianity. The effect of this individualization, as MacIntyre identifies, was that Christianity became largely depoliticized in its opposition of religious to political institutions (MacIntyre 1953, p. 24). Christianity lost its essentially radical—and practical—basis in its this-worldly overcoming of man's alienation and, instead, had 'introduced a religion of otherworldliness and transcendence' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 24).

Christianity's alienation and estrangement, rooted in Judaism's own estrangement, was reflected in its separation of church and society, religion and politics. Christianity could not, therefore, solve the riddle of 'coming into one's own', of achieving the radical vision of The Gospel, as it was itself a product of its own estrangement. To recognize this was one of Hegel's achievements, argues MacIntyre. Yet if Hegel recognized this in religion, he failed to escape his own bourgeois-idealist limitations and was thus no more able to solve the riddle than Christianity was. Trapped in his idealist prism, divorced from the 'actuality of history'

(MacIntyre 1953, p. 27), this blinded Hegel to the fact that the emerging capitalist society led not to freedom but to misery. So while Hegel was crucial, just as Christianity was, in providing a vision of what man is and what he ought to be through the unfolding of human freedom, this was a vision of man empty of any historical, and therefore practical, content. Hegel identified the contradictions of Christianity, but as the prime example of a 'Bourgeois genius in its most optimistic period' failed to identify the limitations of his own historical framework (MacIntyre 1953, p. 27). Feuerbach, despite his own recognition that the Gospel must be humanized and his interpretation of religion as alienation also saw thought as the 'crown of reality'. Like Hegel, he saw the path to redemption as through 'hard thinking' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 36). Hegel and Feuerbach had therefore paved the way for Marx, in terms of reinterpreting the Christian vision of freedom (MacIntyre 1953, p. 45), yet they both shared the idealist illusion that the path to such freedom was an intellectual one.

MacIntyre goes on to argue that Marx, in moving beyond Hegel's illusion, nevertheless remained a Hegelian 'to the last' (MacIntyre 1953, pp. 37–38), at least in philosophical terms. MacIntyre's Marxism, throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, would retain the fundamental belief that Marxism without Hegel was 'rigid, mechanical, inhuman' (MacIntyre 1958, p. 42). Indeed, MacIntyre points out, Marx's own method is essentially just a 'new phase' of the Hegelian dialectic. What Marx did come to realize, though, was that philosophy alone was not enough. Philosophy, in order to solve the Hegelian contradiction between the vision and reality of freedom and unfreedom (becoming ever more urgent due to the degradations of capitalism) had to be transformed into an instrument of practice (MacIntyre 1953, p. 45). Marx was engaged in a process of the 'settling of accounts' with philosophy, in that he was situating it within practice and questioning its 'independence and the primacy which much philosophy had claimed for its own activity' (Fracchia and Ryan 1992, pp. 57–58).

It is in developing this idea that MacIntyre makes his first specific reference to what would become a constant cornerstone to his philosophy and politics: Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*. The Theses that concern MacIntyre here are the second and the fourth. The second Thesis asserts that, contrary to Feuerbach's contemplative approach, truth can only be found in and through practice. Truth is found through a process of active discovery not simply through studying and observing the world

(MacIntyre 1953, p. 61). A true philosophy is therefore that which enables us to change reality. The fourth thesis is concerned with the process of how we go about changing said reality. Does the change begin within us, with our thoughts and desires on what we want to achieve? Or does it reside in action, with the transformation of circumstances? Marx's answer is that you cannot do one without the other. As we begin to change the world we begin also to change ourselves. It is only in and through such *revolutionary practice* that we can hope to understand the world for what it really is. It is revolutionary practice, defined as such, that remains a constant in MacIntyre. From the New Left's *Notes from the Moral Wilderness* in 1958, through 1981s *After Virtue*, and 2016s *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, MacIntyre is concerned with outlining forms of activity and life in and through which participants can begin to change themselves and their circumstances simultaneously. This conception of the relationship between theory and practice, rooted in Marx, has taken a number of different paths, notably through Aristotle and Aquinas. Yet, as MacIntyre suggested in 1994, the Thomistic-Aristotelianism that he now advocates can be at least partially understood as an attempt to best develop the young Marx's conception of revolutionary practice (MacIntyre 1994b).

It is in the early works of Marx that MacIntyre sees the emancipatory potential of Marxism. This is impressive, not only because MacIntyre was in his early twenties, but also as the 1844 Manuscripts, on which he bases much of the discussion, were only available in German at the time. While some of the themes MacIntyre develops here may be more familiar to us now, in the context of the early 1950s they were highly significant and quite original. Indeed, some commentators have argued that M: AI was one of the most significant Marxist-humanist works of the next ten years, prefiguring many themes of the New Left (McMylor 1994, p. 12) or, indeed, the previous decade (Davidson 2013, p. 137). MacIntyre is drawn to the early works of Marx for what he sees as their humanistic qualities, their moral vision drawn from Christianity, and their prophetic, rather than predictive, nature. It is in these assertions about the qualities of Marxism, as well as the counterclaims about its subsequent deficiencies, that some of the most important argument in M: AI develops.

Perhaps the most significant point that MacIntyre develops, in terms of how it shapes a number of his key concerns, is the assertion that there was an epistemological break within Marx's own work that can be traced *to The German Ideology*. This, of course, prefigures the famous

epistemological break attributed to Marx by Louis Althusser. However, MacIntyre's assessment of the break could not be more different from Althusser's. Althusser regarded the break as an expulsion of socialist humanism from Marx's thought and a shift from one set of ideological concepts to another set of scientific ones (Althusser 1969; Dews 1994, p. 119). This, for Althusser, meant that socialism—Marxism—only really *became* Marxism once it had rid itself of what was, in effect, the bourgeois-ideological method that characterized the early Marx. Because of Althusser's absolute insistence in the incongruence of ideology and science, this led him to argue that humanism and Marxism were logically incompatible as the former was ideology and the latter was science. The humanist attempt to combine 'socialism' and 'humanism' was therefore impossible.

Leaving aside an assessment of this argument for now (we will return to it later), the conclusion is clear that the post-break Marx is viewed by Althusser as the true Marx. MacIntyre, to an extent at least, reverses this assertion. This is not to say that the reversal is a total one—or that anything beyond *The German Ideology* is of no value to MacIntyre—but the real value and ethical core of Marx stems, for MacIntyre, from his early socialist humanist works. A decade later, MacIntyre would, interestingly, criticize the 'boring rehearsal of stock platitudes' associated with the 'myth' of the young, humanistic Marx and his break with 'pre-Marxist' concepts such as alienation (MacIntyre 1964, p. 322). MacIntyre would argue that the notion of alienation was never discarded by the older Marx—as the dominant, humanist interpretation mistakenly asserts. Indeed, the mature Marx's concepts of work and unfreedom are unintelligible, suggests MacIntyre, unless related to the concept of alienation (MacIntyre 1964, p. 323). Nevertheless, MacIntyre did not fully reverse his crucial point that there was a shift from prophecy to predictive science in the mature Marx. This is an important point because, as we shall see, a number of MacIntyre's later criticisms of Marxism were predicated on this view that Marx moved from prophecy to prediction and, perhaps even importantly, later Marxists repeated and amplified this mistake.

The centrality of humanism to the early Marx illuminates the close links between Marxism and Religion which the later Marx does his best to sever. Marx, argues MacIntyre, inherits from the Gospel a vision of hope for the redemption of humanity, a 'second Adam' who is to 'come of the poor and dispossessed' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 77). Yet while the young Marx shared with Christianity a moral vision of common

humanity, the Marx of *The Communist Manifesto* and beyond saw, first, only a common *class* and, later, only a common *theory*. The common humanity, which initially drew men together, then pulled them apart and divided them into classes. This was a division of men not recognized in The Bible. Yet it was a corruption of Marxism that was taken from the infection of Christianity with orthodoxy. While religion initially proclaimed the salvation of man, this was turned into the salvation of Christians. As with Communism, the adoption of this conception of orthodoxy turned the salvation of man into the salvation of the proletariat (MacIntyre 1953, p. 102). Further still, Marxism lost its human core altogether—became dehumanized—shedding its original basis in human relations and life activity to merely 'assent or dissent from certain theories' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 76). Marxism, in effect, had become a collection of theoretical and scientific propositions, expunging its humanistic core. The explanation for Marx's expulsion of humanism lies in Marx's move from prophecy into predictive science. Again, what Marx is doing here, suggests MacIntyre, is severing the links with Christianity that had ultimately provided Marxism with its moral scope, vision and emancipatory power. This 'tragedy' of Marxism stems from Marx's doomed attempt to transform his theories from prophecy into science. If Althusser essentially views the move from prophecy to predictive science as the necessary step toward genuine Marxism, MacIntyre views it as perhaps the key point where Marxism loses its way.

Marx, MacIntyre argues, was compelled to drop the prophetic basis of his theories, to distill them into science, as religion itself had shown that prophecy in its original form was incompatible with the modern world (MacIntyre 1953, p. 108). The divorce of the church from any basis in practical activity, its move from this world to the other world, convinced Marx that his prophecy had to be made scientific if it was to avoid becoming a substitute for history and practice (MacIntyre 1953, p. 87). This divorce of theory and practice was, of course, anathema to Marx who asked questions of history precisely because he wants to change history (MacIntyre 1953, p. 111). It was only, for Marx, through the claim to science that his theory is vindicated.

MacIntyre argues that what Marx essentially does here is to fail to understand the consequences of swapping prophecy for predictive science and with this, the nature and role of religion. Marx's mistake is to generalize a critique of modern Christianity to a critique of *all* religion. In effect, Marx fails to recognize the idealism inherent in his own

summation and judgment on the idealism of religion (MacIntyre 1953, p. 88). This critique is structurally very similar to MacIntyre's later refutation of the applicability of the Stalinist critique to *all* forms of Marxism (MacIntyre 1960). Yet, at this stage, MacIntyre's concern is with rescuing the revolutionary core of *both* Marxism and Christianity, rather than just the former.

Macintyre makes the point that there are fundamental differences between prophecy and prediction. Prophecy is not simply an imprecise prediction and MacIntyre highlights four differences. Firstly, prophecy is 'unashamedly anthropomorphic' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 90), in that its purpose is always expressed in personal terms. Secondly, if a prediction is to have any value it must predict accurately both what will happen and when it will happen, while prophecy points toward a more general pattern of events thus broadening its applicability. Thirdly, while a prediction tells us what to expect, a prophecy may come true in 'quite unexpected' ways. Fourthly, a prophecy is verified through trust in the prophet rather than in prediction's verification in the outcome of events. MacIntyre would continue to develop this idea, such as here in 1959, when he argued that religion was best characterized in terms of beliefs, 'as the words of one whom we trust'. A key fallacy in defense of religious beliefs, argues MacIntyre, involves confusion over the nature of causality. We too often look for signs of divinity as proof, as 'causal inference' of God's existence, yet this not only misunderstands the complexity of causality, it 'prepares the ground' for unbelief, in that belief depends on arguments that may turn out to be fallacious (MacIntyre 1959b, p. 116). Logically, MacIntyre develops a very similar argument within M: AI that suggests he views the history of both Marx and Marxists as falling victim to the same kind of confusion. Religious beliefs cannot be treated as explanatory hypotheses because its subject matter, the universe itself, necessarily encompasses so many other potential explanations. In 1957, MacIntyre argued:

> … if religious beliefs are explanatory hypotheses, there can be no justification whatever for continuing to hold them … to treat religious beliefs as such is to falsify both the kind of belief that they are and the way in which they are characteristically held. (MacIntyre 1970, p. 186)

Importantly, this provides an element of adaptability to prophecy that is necessarily absent from prediction. This is because, while prophecy presupposes commitment, this commitment can change and adapt as

followers gain greater knowledge of both God and those who represent him. Alternatively, prediction is less flexible, more deterministic, in that it lives or dies through a process of essentially empirical verification. Crucially, for MacIntyre, the Marx of the *1844 manuscripts* held a prophetic view of society (MacIntyre 1953, p. 90) before he entered the 'realm of theory' with *The Communist Manifesto*. This compelled Marx to give a concrete, practical vision for the creation of a new society. Marx's vision of history now claimed empirical confirmation and *The German Ideology* represented not a prophecy but the 'foundation of a science' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 69). With this transition to science came the expulsion of religion, of humanism, and of the moral foundations of Marx's theory.

MacIntyre argues that there are significant contradictory tensions in Marx's transition from prophecy to theory. In moving from a moral to a scientific concern, Marx, argues MacIntyre, wishes now to 'speak of *what is* rather than what ought to be' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 70). Yet Marx's philosophy is also a philosophy of action developed to change the world, not simply an interpretation of what actually 'is'. Secondly, in abandoning prophecy for theory Marx creates a problem for himself in abandoning himself to empirical confirmation. Theories, notes MacIntyre, are always 'tentative, provisional, waiting on confirmation' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 70). Yet this does not sit well with a doctrine that professes to be world-changing. Thirdly, the scientific claim of a theory of what men 'will be' rather than 'ought' to be, hinges on the acceptance of what that theory lays down. This opens up Marxism for rejection in a way that does not apply to prophecy. The most important consequence of the move from morality to science, argues MacIntyre, is how it restricts alienation and estrangement to specific social and economic spheres. The rejection of moral concerns essentially prevents Marx from understanding other potentially damaging forms of human alienation that fail to fit with Marx's scientific method. Marxism fell victim to its own ambitions in trying to combine the scope and vision of metaphysics with the certainty of science (MacIntyre 1953, p. 71). Marxism is committed to the ultimate concern of men in overcoming alienation that, from the beginning, gives it greater dimension and scope than the natural sciences. Marxism could never, then, break from the metaphysical element that was inherent to it. It wanted to claim a scientific certainty for what was an essentially metaphysical concern. It rejected its metaphysical—religious—basis by attempting to give a scientific basis to human

action and agency. Yet human action is not scientific, always riven with unpredictability and the limitations of human thought indelibly mark it, meaning that it can never be a science (MacIntyre 1953, p. 71).

If Marxism's move into science from prophecy represented a form of self-alienation, which in turn restricted and blinded Marx to other forms of alienation, MacIntyre also takes issue with the foundations of this move—the rejection of religion. In much the same way that MacIntyre defends the revolutionary and ethical core of Marx's thought, he defends the originally revolutionary purpose and nature of religion. Nevertheless, MacIntyre largely agrees with much of Marx's critique of religion in terms of how it becomes a reactionary force. It does this through its transference of hope for the good society from this world to another (MacIntyre 1953, p. 79). Religion becomes conservative in the way that it both consoles the oppressed and sanctifies the established order (MacIntyre 1953, p. 79). Yet, rooted in the gospel, religion initially saw liberation as this-worldly and redemption and freedom were to be delivered on this earth. MacIntyre therefore takes issues with Marx's assessment of religion in general, questioning the notion that otherworldliness is an essential quality of religion (MacIntyre 1953, pp. 82–83).

MacIntyre maintains that the religion that is untouched by Marx's critique is the religion that proclaims the inadequacy, not the justification, of every social order. MacIntyre would later claim that what made Aquinas revolutionary was his belief that a virtuous life conflicted with, and was disruptive of, certain types of social order (Knight 2007, p. 173). Marx's key error is in failing to understand that religion can be redemptive of, not just from, this world (MacIntyre 1953, p. 83). Marx applies to religion the rationalism that he inherits from Hegel and Feuerbach. Marx assumes, argues MacIntyre, a 'highly suspect' a priori standard of rationality to which human relations should conform (MacIntyre 1953, p. 85). Religious beliefs do not conform to such standards so for Marx they are therefore false. This is because, on this view, the mystifications of religion essentially serve to conceal human truths so they must be superseded, replaced, with a more correct, rational framework. Myth and image, on this interpretation, work as obstructions to human rationality. Yet Myth does not have to be understood from within the a priori rational framework that Marx assigns to it. Myth does not have to indicate an obstruction of human truth, it can

also signify that there is something in religion beyond the boundaries of humanity, and therefore beyond the framework which Marx assigns to it. Myth is not science; it does something different in aiming to provide an understanding of the world beyond that offered by science.

MacIntyre's point is that one cannot coherently assign standards of rationality to one thing and not another. Why he asks, should it be rational to eat, to love, or to think, but not to pray? (MacIntyre 1953, p. 86). What grounds, indeed, can there be for assuming the superiority of one interpretation of reason over a different interpretation of myth? MacIntyre rejects Marx's account of religion—all religion that is—as idealist. The concept of myth is again here important. MacIntyre argues that religion only becomes idealist when myth itself becomes a substitute for history (MacIntyre 1953, p. 87). Marxism's failure is that it mistakes religion for pure myth (McMylor 1994, p. 6). Indeed, MacIntyre argues that it is Marx, here, who is guilty of idealism in his failure to apply his own materialism to religion. Marx again applies an a priori standard of judgment in his refusal to see Jesus as providing the historicized aspect to religion that sets it apart from idealism.

What appeals to MacIntyre at this stage is the young Marx's strong moral foundation drawn from the resources of Christianity and exemplified in the *1844 Manuscripts*. The young Macintyre understands Marxism as developing its inherently moral and prophetic qualities from religion. Yet religion, if it is to rescue its radical, revolutionary core, must learn too from Marxism. The role of Marxism is to complete the radical vision of redemption and reconciliation that The Gospel envisages. If Christianity offers no political guidance it is irrelevant to human life. As MacIntyre would later suggest, the problem with any kind of doctrine, be it Christianity or humanism, is not the values or qualities it professes to have, it is how to embody these politically, within social institutions (MacIntyre 1963, p. 20). MacIntyre's hope is to combine the best, revolutionary elements of both Marxism and Christianity in order to develop a political practice that can provide an alternative to a capitalist system that restricts the development of man to his full capacity. MacIntyre sees Communism as inspiring the same level of commitment that only religion can inspire despite, ironically, religion having lost such commitment within the modern world. MacIntyre points out that 'the exchange of Roman Catholicism for Communism … bears witness to the likeness between these two systems' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 108).

Yet if Marxism and Christianity both share similar strengths in terms of their moral scope and vision, their dimensions of commitment, they also share fundamental failings. MacIntyre argues that both display a tendency to dogma, orthodoxy and to treat deviations from their central tenets as heresy. Both are often blind to the truth, change and susceptible to corruption. Both have tended to conflate truth with orthodoxy (MacIntyre 1953, p. 101). If religion's key failing is its retreat from politics, Marxism's is its refusal to apply its own rigorous standards internally and treat its own doctrine as falsifiable. Therefore Marxism cannot escape its own ideological obfuscation, nor can it ever fulfill its self-proclaimed scientific credentials (D'Andrea 2006, p. 94).

What can be made of MacIntyre's Marxism at this stage? It seems that MacIntyre is still more Christian than Marxist, despite his obvious affinity for Marx's work and his membership of the CPGB. Despite the affinities between them, his Calvinist upbringing, rather than his adopted Marxism (Knight 2007, p. 107), seems the more influential at this stage. This, I would suggest, is at least partially identifiable because he seems much more willing to subject Marx's premises to critique than his own religious ones. As Lutz argues (2004, pp. 17–18), MacIntyre can find no rational justification for his Christian framework, despite criticizing Marx for essentially smuggling in his own unjustified rationalist framework from which to attack religion. More broadly, the role of Marxism here is to 'complete' or to 'develop' Christianity, so Marxism takes the role of the deliverer of Christian values rather than providing its own moral, humanist—and specifically Marxist—framework. As we saw earlier, MacIntyre has much admiration for the 'common humanity' of both The Gospel and the young Marx, viewing the separation of man by classes much more problematically. As we shall see later, in NFTMW for example, while far from a completed theoretical position, MacIntyre moves beyond M: AI in arguing that Marxists 'discover' their values, not through a commitment to the gospel but through the class struggle (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 96). The commitment to both the gospel and humanism are clear, the analysis and exposition of Marxism perhaps less so.

In 1953 then, this is still a relatively vague, unspecified Marxism, free of any commitment to a specific tradition of, say, a Trotsky or a Lenin. For MacIntyre in 1953, Marxism is at its best when it is closest to practically based, un-alienated religion. Yet there is little in terms of how this might be, or indeed has been concretized, through any specific analysis of Marxist movements or traditions. MacIntyre's scattered comments on significant figures within Marxism also suggest, perhaps surprisingly, a

relatively orthodox view of the relationship between and transition from Marx and Engels, to Lenin and then Stalin (Davidson 2013, p. 139). The view MacIntyre expounds is surprisingly orthodox in its acceptance of the relatively unbroken lineage from Marx to Stalin (Davidson 2013, p. 139). Here, MacIntyre suggests that Lenin took from Marx his conception of revolutionary leadership which led to the centralization of power within the party which itself led, inevitably, to the dictator (MacIntyre 1953, p. 103). The question of the relationship of party to worker would become central to MacIntyre, and would remain so, forming one of the key criticisms of Marxism in AV and beyond and which will be a significant area of discussion in later chapters.

Despite MacIntyre's admiration for the dimension of commitment that Communism inspires, when Marxism strays from the early Marx, into science or into the realm of the party, MacIntyre sees it at its most problematic. Beyond the nature and role of the party, the scientific Marx is also attacked in M: AI for his bad economics and, as a result, erroneous predictions. It is the Marx of *Capital* that is MacIntyre's target here. This is not to say Macintyre does not greatly admire the analytical skill and scholarship of *Capital*, quite the opposite. Indeed, the most problematic aspect to *Capital* is not that Marx's predictions might not have come true, it is the reaction of subsequent Marxists to the apparent falsification of Marx's theories. As we shall see, while MacIntyre becomes increasingly critical of the Marxist tradition he still, in his contemporary thought, places great value on the ideas of the young Marx.

The problems of *Capital* itself, argues MacIntyre, stem from Marx's insistence in giving a 'scientific and historical analysis of the capitalist process' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 94). This results, argues MacIntyre, in Marx having to ask new questions of Capitalism to show his own theory's scientific value—chief among those questions are those that concern the beginnings and end of capitalism. Specifically, it is Marx's labor theory of value that is the problem here. On Marx's terms, increasing centralization and monopolization of capital eventually destabilizes the system, becoming an increasingly unbearable strain, that both immiserates and radicalizes the working class, leading to capitalism's eventual downfall. MacIntyre notes that this prediction of the immiseration of the working class has been 'decisively falsified' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 96), nevertheless, capitalism *has* failed—just not in the way that Marx thought it might. What does MacIntyre mean by this? He suggests that what is collapsing is not the capitalist economy but capitalist civilization. MacIntyre's

argument is that the process of capitalist development, in stripping everything down to economic relations, has created two equally alienated proletariats—worker and intellectual/artist. Neither is at home, nor are their skills valued, within the framework of this economic struggle. Here, MacIntyre seemingly at his most optimistic argues that it is the trade union-based organization of the worker combined with the cultural struggle of the intellectual that, together, 'form the nuclei of the forces which are breaking down capitalism' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 98). Yet none of this is very clear. It is not particularly clear what exactly MacIntyre means by capitalist civilization. It is certainly not very clear what he means when he suggests that capitalism is being broken down. He certainly does not mean what Marx means in terms of the end of capitalism or the ushering in of a new economic system—he makes this quite apparent. Perhaps reflective of the strong humanist streak running through M: AI, there is an as yet undeveloped analysis of how the system itself might come to be challenged.

MacIntyre does state that Marx's theory of capitalism's failure has indeed come true, just not in the way that he predicted. He argues that there are three responses when predictions, such as Marx's prediction of the economic failure of capitalism, turn out to be falsified. The first is the abandonment of the theory itself. This, argues MacIntyre, is what the Bernstein revisionists did in essentially accepting the fact that capitalism could no longer be overthrown as Marx had predicted. The second, and in many ways much more problematic response for MacIntyre, is to reinterpret or reimagine the theory through a series of 'auxiliary responses' designed to account for the predictive failure. On one level, the attempts to do this by Marxists were simply wrong-headed, argued MacIntyre. To try to explain capitalist crisis through under-consumption theory is to employ a theory which Marx himself rejected. Whatever its merits, it is not the work of Marx. Yet what matters *most* is not so much the theoretical inadequacies of Marxists, suggests MacIntyre, it is the general pattern of Marxists to fail to understand *any* theory as being necessarily conditioned by historical truth and error (MacIntyre 1953, p. 100). So despite Marx trying to rid himself of religion, his Marxist followers took on the guise of religion through sanctifying Marx's own work and treating deviation from it as heresy. This, conversely, was made possible by the sheer scope and vision of Marxism—it is a doctrine about

the universe and not just about economics. Again, what we see here from MacIntyre is the recognition that Marxism's religious grounding and scope of vision provide both its fundamental strengths—as we saw previously—and its weaknesses. The latter, because it is quite unsurprising, logical even, that an essentially religious doctrine such as Marxism might confuse truth for orthodoxy.

There are two dangerous 'correlatives' of orthodoxy, argues MacIntyre. Firstly, any deviation from the path to redemption—a path open only to the orthodox believer—is treated as heretical in that it threatens the very act of redemption itself. The heretic, argues MacIntyre, is more dangerous than the unbeliever in the realm of orthodoxy. Relatedly, if it is only through orthodoxy that redemption can be achieved, orthodoxy must never be discredited and always protected against criticism (MacIntyre 1953, p. 102). Often tragically, notes MacIntyre, it is orthodoxy conceived in such a way that inhibits any kind of repentance and justifies almost any kind of action in the name of loyalty (MacIntyre 1953, p. 103). It is the infiltration of orthodoxy, religiously conceived, which for MacIntyre finally 'destroys any pretensions that Marxism may have to the status of science' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 101).

Yet even with this recognition of the inadequacies of Marxism, importantly, we can still see in M: AI the acceptance of certain fundamental truths and potentialities developed from within the resources of Marxism. These truths have remained central to MacIntyre long after he rejected Marxism as a political practice. One of these truths takes the form of the proper relationship between philosophy and practice. Taken from Marx, MacIntyre sets the foundations for his assertions concerning the inadequacies of moral–analytic philosophy:

> What separates this kind of philosophical analysis from both Marxism and Christianity is its divorce from practice and from all practical concerns. Marx asked the questions, what is the demiurge of history, is it thought or material conditions, because he wished to change history. This is his motive for trying to understand it. Thus Marx's questions are not theoretical, but practical. Or rather, his theory cannot be divorced from his practice. This separation of theory and practice is the key to analytical philosophy. It leads to a complete divorce of ethical theory from moral practice. (MacIntyre 1953, p. 111)

MacIntyre observes that this separation of theory and practice, of fact and value, is central to the emotivist claims of analytical philosophy. These claims assume that moral judgments do nothing but express feelings rather than factual–practical claims about the correctness of the action. 'This is good' means only 'I approve of this' from this perspective, telling us only the meaning of moral utterances rather than any claim about what moral judgments should be made in any given situation (MacIntyre 1953, pp. 112–113). The association of moral judgments with either approval or disapproval is, according to MacIntyre, a 'dangerous half-truth' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 112). The self-evident half-truth stems from the obvious situation where arguing to do 'x' is 'wrong', clearly suggests approval or disapproval. Yet this brings us, for MacIntyre, no nearer to understanding the distinctive 'meaning or function' of moral judgments. The fundamental failing of analytic moral philosophy, suggests MacIntyre, is that it fails to explain such meaning or function as it misdiagnoses moral judgments as either explanatory or descriptive because it divorces them from behavior—i.e. practice. It is only possible to understand the meaning of a moral judgment through reference to the behavior that makes the proclamation intelligible. MacIntyre uses the example of 'Jones approving of Socialism', stating that an understanding of this has to be grounded in the past behavior of Jones that was deemed favorable to socialism and that might lead us to expect similar behavior in the future. What analytical philosophy is missing are the Marxian and Hegelian concepts of 'practical consciousness' such as desire, intention and choice through which meaning and function are explained (MacIntyre 1960). The logical corollary here is that without reference to practice, to behavior, morality would have no purpose. For it is only in and through the decisions we make in our social life that the very sphere of morality exists; to divorce morality from social life is to make a leap of logic that is untenable.

MacIntyre extends this argument against traditional moral philosophy in terms of its fixation with the meaning of words such as 'good' and 'right'. To concentrate on the meaning of the word 'good', and the corresponding questions concerning whether good here refers to some subjective or perhaps objective quality of 'good' is a false dilemma. It is false because it asks an unanswerable question. Unanswerable, argues MacIntyre, because questions such as this do not actually *refer* to anything at all—they are not statements of fact but 'appeals for guidance' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 114). In effect, argues MacIntyre, moral judgments work to 'announce our decisions'. Once we have decided how we settle

such practical, moral dilemmas, the 'problem of the nature of the moral judgment will have solved itself' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 114). MacIntyre develops this critique of the fact-value distinction by making the point that, contrary to the emotivist interpretation, language is not simply either descriptive or emotive, except at a very simplistic level. In any more complex use of language, beyond simple 'either' 'or' distinctions, it is very often both. In citing Engels' description of the conditions of the working class in England, MacIntyre observes that 'the description itself is the condemnation' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 115). The facts themselves are never neutral; they are used for specific purposes, and the same 'facts' can speak in very different ways depending on the speaker. Beyond the grasp of Hegel, the whole question of materialism is 'not a speculative, but a practical one' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 117); beyond the grasp of analytical philosophy, the whole question of morality is also a practical one.

It is immediately clear that the critique of analytical philosophy that MacIntyre would develop over the next few years—exemplified most clearly in AV and beyond—has a strong grounding in Marx's own method. What attracted MacIntyre to Marx was that, in much the same way as Christianity, he understood that philosophy could not be divorced from practice. This was simultaneously an assertion of both fact and value and therefore, with it, a rejection of idealism which shared the same inadequacies of modern moral philosophy. In M: AI MacIntyre is beginning to find the tools from which he will fashion not only his developing Marxist ethics but also the later, decisive political and sociological rejection of that same tradition. For while M: AI contains the revolutionary kernel of Marxism that he would hope to develop, it also points toward both the political and philosophical inadequacies of Marxism that would form the basis of the five-point critique in AV that we will discuss later. The question of the relationship between party and worker, as well as the pseudo-scientific claims of Marxists—later developed into the critique of bureaucratic rationality—have their foundations here. More broadly, from within the resources of Marxism and Christianity, MacIntyre develops his critique of capitalism. His assessment of the nature of the capitalist system has remained relatively unchanged throughout his entire intellectual development. Here, he recognizes the alienation and inequality of a world-system that is anathema to the teachings of both the gospel and the young Marx. So even as MacIntyre dropped, first, Christianity (before returning to it in a different form) and, secondly, Marxism, he remained committed to the development of a society such as that envisaged by both the young Marx and the teachings of the Gospel.

Despite MacIntyre's assertions on the corruption and dogmatic quality of strains of Communism, he still, in 1953, views Communism as inherently valuable for its role in being able to break through the 'economic and moral complacency' of society in a way that the modern Church cannot (MacIntyre 1953, p. 106). Importantly, the experience of the degradation of Marxism through the eyes of ex-Communists is not, at this stage, a reason to give up on Communism. This is a danger against which MacIntyre specifically argues we should guard against; furthermore, anti-Communism shares the same dogmas as Communism but without any of its virtues (MacIntyre 1953, p. 119). The conclusion is that the experience of Communism does not, in the last instance, irrevocably damage the revolutionary essence of Marx, just as the degradation of religion does not do the same for the teachings of The Gospel. MacIntyre understands that if Christian hope is to be realized, it must take a political form. It must decisively reject the retreat from practice and politics that have characterized contemporary Christianity and place its hope in a political form such as that envisioned by Marx. MacIntyre argues that what Marxism and Christianity share is a commitment to that which is 'truly human', what is needed is the forging of a new community that is committed to both politics and to prayer. The two most relevant books in the world, argues MacIntyre, are 'St. Mark's Gospel and *Marx's National Economy and Philosophy*; but they must be read together' (MacIntyre 1953, p. 109).

This has been a rather long and broadly textual discussion of what, with M: AI, is a rather short book. After all, it is one book among many, and many longer works besides. Yet I believe this lengthy, rather textual approach is justified. M: AI provides preliminary discussions of many of the key themes and concerns that would continue to occupy MacIntyre throughout his intellectual genesis. It is far from an early curio with little contemporary relevance. Of particular importance is MacIntyre's search for a form of revolutionary practice that can resist the corrupting and alienating tendencies of the modern, capitalist world. M: AI is an unmistakable, if necessarily undeveloped, attempt to frame this search in both Marxist and Christian terms. MacIntyre's Marxism is unmistakeably Hegelian. The Hegelian-Marxist understanding of history as a dialectical process of unfolding freedom would provide the essential foundations on which MacIntyre would later attempt to explicate a Marxist ethics.

The later, self-proclaimed 'non-bullshit' Marxism of the analytical school and its expulsion of the Hegelian dialectic would, it scarcely needs saying, be alien to MacIntyre (Cohen 2000, p. xxv). Similarly, any form of Marxism that rejected the essential humanist core of Marxism, such as the structuralism of Althusser would, from MacIntyre's perspective, remove that which was most valuable in Marx's thought. Macintyre understood Marxism as humanism, a humanism that was practically oriented, and that had a particular understanding of revolutionary practice developed from Marx's ToF.

Marx's notion of *revolutionary practice* as sketched in the third Thesis on Feuerbach (Marx 1969) has always remained a constant reference point, informing MacIntyre's political vision, and understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, throughout his Marxist, Aristotelian and Thomistic-Aristotelian evolution. The idea of the overcoming of alienation, common to both Christianity and the early Marx, is similarly representative of MacIntyre's politics in both his Marxist and post-Marxist period (Knight 2007, p. 187). Just as importantly, we can see in this earliest work the beginnings of criticisms of Marx and Marxists that would eventually contribute to MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism. In particular, MacIntyre is already concerned with the way that Marxism becomes dogmatic and corrupted in the hands of orthodoxies, just as Christianity does. Macintyre clearly sees Marx's own transition from prophecy to science and prediction as having far-reaching consequences. Again, the predictive nature and scientific pretensions of Marxists would become central to MacIntyre's critique of Marxism. Nevertheless, for a time, MacIntyre's concerns with Marxism did not prove fatal. Indeed, for nearly a decade after M: AI, MacIntyre's commitment to Marxism as a form of potentially ethical, revolutionary practice would strengthen rather than weaken. There is little evidence of much engagement with Lenin or Trotsky beyond some superficially negative comments in M: AI, yet this would change quite drastically toward the end of the 1950s. For MacIntyre, these great Marxist figures of the twentieth century would, for a limited time and in a certain form, increasingly provide the understanding of how socialism might come into existence. Reflecting this, Marxism would gradually become much more important to MacIntyre than Christianity in providing the resources of resistance to the contemporary social order.

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CHAPTER 3

The New Left

MacIntyre's first significant engagement with Marxism began in 1953 with M: AI's attempt to draw out the similarities between *Marxism and Christianity* and to assert the valuable ethical and political resources within both. If 1953 was the beginning of MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism, 1956, and all that went with it, was a crucial year in providing the motivation that strengthened MacIntyre's commitment to socialism and his engagement with various Marxist or socialist-inspired groups and organizations. In order to fully appreciate and understand MacIntyre's work from the late 1950s through until the early–mid 1960s these therefore have to be contextualized with an understanding of this crucial period.

The chapter begins with an overview of the key events and themes of 1956 and the groupings that emerged at least partially as a reaction to those events. In particular, the *NR* journal and its associated personnel, along with their key works, form an important context to MacIntyre's later contributions to these debates on the nature of socialism. One of the most significant debates within what became known as The First New Left was started by the great Historian E. P. Thompson in his essay *Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Philistines.* Indeed, it was as a contribution to this debate that MacIntyre wrote what was perhaps his single most important essay in this period, NFTMW. NFTMW displays, in characteristic MacIntyrean fashion, influences from well beyond just Marx. Present here, too, is Aristotle, as well as an understanding of the complexity of human action and agency that was influenced by

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_3

analytic philosophy. Such an understanding of human action appealed to MacIntyre, seemingly, as it represented the antithesis of the determinism of Stalinism's distortion of Marxism.

Yet the framework within which MacIntyre was developing his ideas was unmistakeably a Marxist one. MacIntyre continues to believe that there is a place for an 'abstract conceptual account' of human action, providing it is grounded in 'detailed, insightful descriptions of acts of thought', which may well take it 'beyond' the examples it describes. His appreciation of the analytic tradition's philosophical care and rigor, however, does not affect his overriding belief that its view of philosophy as a 'second-order' contemplative activity, merely reflecting on 'first-order' activities, is a fundamentally flawed conception of the nature and role of philosophy (MacIntyre 1999, p. xiv). MacIntyre was gradually coming to the conclusion that a Marxist ethics could only be realized, not only through the class struggle, but through the class struggle supplemented and driven by a revolutionary organization. This was seemingly an important factor in compelling MacIntyre to move beyond the confines of a New Left—that viewed Lenin and Trotsky with suspicion—and into the revolutionary Marxist organization of the Socialist Labour League. MacIntyre's Marxism therefore developed within two often conflicting organizations, both of which need to be understood to provide a fuller picture of MacIntyre's progress.

After leaving the SLL, MacIntyre joined a third organization within which he developed his Marxism and which, directly or indirectly, shaped his politics—the International Socialism grouping. It was here that MacIntyre came into contact with influential figures such as his coeditor of the IS journal, Michael Kidron, and where he came into the orbit of another significant influence on his thought—the Socialism or Barbarism grouping and its key theorists. IS was the final Marxist organization that MacIntyre belonged to; Indeed, as far as I can tell, it is the final political organization of any kind that MacIntyre belonged to. It is therefore fundamentally important to discuss not only the influences that these groups had on his Marxism but also, later, their role in his eventual rejection of Marxism.

What will emerge from the discussion in this chapter and the following one, I hope, is a reasonably clear picture of MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism between the years of the late 1950s and the mid-1960s. This, I suggest, is initially a period of renewed political optimism

emerging out of a difficult period in the history of the left in Britain as represented in the vibrancy of those *NR* debates of the late 1950s. Yet MacIntyre's optimism here has to be understood alongside his continuing—and gradually strengthening—critique of the inadequacies of Marx's own thought and, perhaps more importantly, the inadequacies of those Marxists who sought to develop Marx's own work. As we move into the 1960s, chastened, perhaps, by his own dealings with Marxists and viewed through the lens of his own particular interpretation of the wider political context, MacIntyre's optimism for a renewal of Marxism eventually dissipated. Whatever is made of MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism and what he eventually puts in its place, he still left behind some significant and largely underappreciated essays as evidence of what he now regards as a doomed project to develop a Marxist ethics. It is to 1956 that we turn first.

Recently, MacIntyre has pointed out that after leaving the Communist Party of Great Britain 'there was no group with which I saw any point in identifying until 1956 and its aftermath' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183). 1956 was clearly not just a significant year for MacIntyre, but for the left in general in triggering a pressing need for a reevaluation of the role and nature of socialism as a result of the tumultuous events of that year. For MacIntyre, this marked the beginning of his most fruitful Marxist period when involved with three key, if often conflicting, organizations in and around which he developed both his exposition and critique of Marxism—*The NR* and *Universities and Left Review* groups, The SLL and, later, IS. In order to contextualize MacIntyre's writing during this period, we need to understand not only something of the context of 1956, but also the influence that each of these groupings had on MacIntyre's writings. Beyond this, we need to be aware of the interrelationship *between* such groupings, the attempt by MacIntyre to straddle often quite politically distinct organizations, and how these groupings helped to shape MacIntyre's writings and political outlook during this period.

1956

> How terrible to be changed from an ordinary human being into a defender of criminal excesses under the guise of historical necessity. (Behan 1991, p. 160)

In late October 1956, Stalin's Soviet Union moved to crush the revolutionary uprising against the Soviet-imposed Communist government in Hungary. The newspaper of the CPGB, *The Daily Worker*, sent a young journalist to cover these events:

> The Daily Worker sent me to Hungary, then suppressed what I wrote. Much of what I wrote was concealed even from my colleagues. Both as a Communist and a human being I believe it my duty to tell the truth about the Hungarian revolution. I believe this will help bring about the urgently-needed redemption and rebirth of the British Communist Party, which for too long has betrayed Socialist principles and driven away some of its finest members by defending the indefensible. (Fryer 1956)

MacIntyre's one-time comrade Peter Fryer—specifically cited, some fifty years later by MacIntyre, as one of those Marxists who most influenced him (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183), makes clear the twin-tragedy of the Hungarian uprising against Stalinism of 1956. It was not simply the events itself that appalled many on the left; it was also the responses of the official Communist parties in suppressing the truth about such events. This was too much for many members of the CPGB. It has been estimated that between February 1956 and February 1958 around 8000 people left the CPGB (Smith and Worley 2014b, p. 5)—a not insignificant number for a far-left 'fringe' group in Britain. MacIntyre, himself a one-time member of the CPGB had already left the party, yet he shared these concerns—'What mattered to many Western European Communists was not just the repression, but the fact that the Party leaderships for the most part lied about it' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 173).

The Soviet repression of 1956 was not the only tumultuous event that year which thundered through the left. At the beginning of the year, Khrushchev's exposure and denunciation of Stalin in his 'secret speeches' had already sent shockwaves across the world, exposing the purges and the cult of the individual of Stalin. If more proof was needed of the failures of 'actually existing socialism' after the speech, the events of Hungary surely provided it. Peter Sedgwick, another one-time comrade of MacIntyre's, fittingly called the period between the secret speech and the events in Hungary one of 'agonized appraisal' for those members of the CPGB who had not yet left but were soon to break ranks (Sedgwick 1976b, p. 135). Yet if these two events clearly

had a huge influence on the emergence of a new left, they alone did not explain the crisis of socialism. The British New Left emerged not just as a result of the increasing recognition of the inadequacies of Communism, but also of the Imperialist West and the failures of Social Democracy to respond to these. A key event that shaped what were the highly specific circumstances of the development of the New Left (Chun 1993, p. 1) was the British–French invasion of Egypt—the Suez crisis of 1956 (which occurred on the same weekend than the events in Hungary). If Hungary exposed Stalinism, then Suez exposed—or perhaps brought into a sharper focus—the myth of Imperialism as being, in the mid-twentieth century, the exclusive property of the Communist East. As Stuart Hall argued, Suez and Hungary 'unmasked the underlying violence and aggression latent in the two systems that dominated political life' (Hall 2010, p. 177).

If the world-historic events of 1956 provided crucial foundations to the development of a New Left in Britain more generally they also, along with other events, issues and causes, formed a core of problems that MacIntyre saw as being pressing for Marxism (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183). These included, but were not limited to, the struggle in the north of Ireland, the problems of trade union activity, of working-class housing and the campaign for nuclear disarmament. A parallel can be drawn here with the reaction to the events in Hungary in 1956. For if those events represented a completely inadequate response from the communist left, the response from the social-democratic left—the British Labour party—to such events, issues and problems was also seen as inadequate. This, argues MacIntyre in reflecting on this period, meant that he could never become a social-democrat as the Labour leadership tended to sustain and strengthen the policies formulated to such issues which MacIntyre, and no doubt a great many others on the left, opposed. Indeed, as argued by MacIntyre in 1968, The Labour Party itself—post-1955—had cut any link with social democracy anyway, in that social democracy necessitated at least some kind of viable link to the interests of the working class, which the Labour Party had proceeded to sever (MacIntyre 1968, p. 237). The responses from both the revolutionary and reformist branches of socialism along with what MacIntyre called the 'deadness and dull cynicism of official politicians' (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 166), in effect, served to strengthen the resolve of the emergent New Left's belief that an alternative to both must be found.

So what was the New Left? What was 'new' about it? it is perhaps useful to say something of the changing nature of radicalism, of protest, and working-class activity in Britain at the time in order to understand the 'conjuncture of historical trends' that formed the context of the New Left's development (Rutherford 2013, p. 10). Beyond Hungary and Suez, perhaps the most important factor was the emergence of the campaign for nuclear disarmament within which political activity allowed the new left to break out of the 'political ghetto' (Davidson 2013, p. 140). If CND 'opened a political space beyond the parameters of traditional politics' (Blackledge 2014, p. 45), it did so by reinvigorating a younger generation of political activists who were, as Thompson identified, 'concerned with serious politics' (Thompson 1959, p. 3). Indeed, as Blackledge also suggests, CND was important to the new left in understanding that this grouping was not just an intellectual grouping but one where political activity was also a central feature. Thompson went so far as to state that 'serious politics today, in any worthwhile scale of human values, commences with nuclear disarmament' (Thompson 1959, p. 3). MacIntyre shared Thompson's views on nuclear disarmament, arguing that anyone who would use the H-bomb has 'contracted out of common humanity' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 96) and asserting 'no state with the Bomb can be a workers' state' (MacIntyre 1961, p. 192). Thompson, despite his praise for this younger generation, was also fully aware of what he saw as 'the immaturities and individualistic attitudes' that they tended to have. Sedgwick, too, was fully aware of the problems of developing specific issue politics into a wider commitment to socialism. He argued that while CND was important as an initial 'rally-point', it was nevertheless a 'dreadful failure' in developing a more permanent commitment to radical politics (Sedgwick 1976a, pp. 25–26). While initially it was heartening to see the massed young faces at the rallies and demos, it gradually became dispiriting, Sedgwick reflects, when the realization came that there was a new set of faces at each gathering (Sedgwick 1976a, p. 21). Therefore, despite reasons for optimism at a time when the working class was 'less radical than it had been in generations' (Blackledge 2006a), (Thompson [1959, p. 3] characterized it as 'living through the decade of the great apathy') there were early signs that the emergent new left would encompass a broad scope of political perspectives, attitudes and causes, and that it would therefore be difficult to develop into any kind of coherent movement or political program. Indeed, as we shall see later, this

diversity manifested itself through MacIntyre's writings in this period where he sometimes seemed to see his role as building bridges, or at least points of commonality, between some of the contrasting political standpoints in this period.

The emergence of the New left could not be characterized as emerging only as a reaction to specific events such as Hungary and Suez—although these were clearly vital. Broader, economic and sociological changes in contemporary capitalism also needed to be thought through if socialism was to remain relevant. Michael Kidron, editor of *International Socialism* (and coeditor with MacIntyre for a time) sought also to explain the causes of economic stabilization in the capitalist states—as well as those tendencies which might destabilize—and these remained important themes of the journal (Thayer 1965, p. 142). The historical trends that shaped the New Left also included the changing nature of newly emerging consumer capitalism in the mid-twentieth century (Rutherford 2013, p. 9). Indeed, Stuart Hall argued that the changing dynamics of modern capitalism demanded a new analysis. The new left recognized that the nature of the class struggle had changed, yet denied this meant that they were somehow emerging into a postcapitalist society (Hall 2010, p. 186).

Many interpretations of the new left characterize diversity, for better or worse, as perhaps the central characteristic of this loose political grouping. Beyond the general sense of dissatisfaction with both Russian Communism and western social democracy, Dorothy Thompson pointed out that not only was there no single ideological position, there was not even an agreed definition of what socialism actually meant (Thompson 1996, p. 93). Madeleine Davis has argued that there existed 'no consistent, common theoretical or political perspective that would allow definitive categorisation' (Davis 2006, p. 339). One of the less charitable, more contemporary interpretations labeled the new left as a 'hotchpotch of self-styled Marxists, frustrated revolutionaries and inveterate malcontents' (Llew Gardner quoted in Smith and Worley 2014b, p. 2). Sedgwick highlights the 'thronged convention of ideas … with a limitless agenda' that characterized the period from early 1957 to the summer of 1961 (Sedgwick 1976b, p. 132). Sedgwick characterizes two sides to the new left—one utopian, and one of 'realpolitik' which crossed and fused before eventually burning out. Tellingly, Sedgwick characterizes these two poles as not just being between individuals, but *within* individuals. This is certainly something that we will see within the writings

of MacIntyre in this period as he tried to square his commitment to both a revolutionary Marxist organization with his developing critique of the nature of many such organizations specifically and Marxism more generally. I have no idea whether Sedgwick had MacIntyre in mind as he wrote this in 1964 (they were both, then, on the editorial board of IS) but it would certainly fit with his characterization of MacIntyre, much later, as an intellectually agonized, conflicted figure, still searching for ethical answers wherever he could find them (Sedgwick 1982).

Any history or assessment of the new left, or any history of anything at all for that matter, will cause disagreements. Specifically though, and perhaps because the New Left was such a loose, diverse grouping incorporating many broad political positions, accounts vary wildly as to who the key figures in this movement were; none more so than in the role of Alasdair MacIntyre within it. Many accounts have no mention at all of MacIntyre, or relegate him to the odd footnote here and there. Dorothy Thompson chides Michael Kenny for the figures he chooses to focus on—yet her own account contains no mention of MacIntyre (Thompson 1996). My account, highlighting what I take to be MacIntyre's important role in the New Left, is clearly subjective in that it necessarily tells only a partial story, omitting others whose contributions were no doubt also significant. Yet what can be done when examining MacIntyre's work, is to show how, perhaps unlike many others, he was prepared to ask the awkward, difficult questions that needed asking, despite not having all the answers. These questions, concerning not only the nature and role of Marxism, but of ethics more generally, remain central not only to MacIntyre's thought but to any attempt to develop an account of ethical, revolutionary practice in the modern world.

Firstly, it is important to reiterate that MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism during this period was not simply in and through the more intellectual groupings of *The NR* or *The Universities and Left Review*. It also developed through MacIntyre's engagement with more political, revolutionary socialist organizations, beginning with the CPBG prior to 1956 but more importantly when he joined the SLL which, at the time, was Britain's largest Trotskyist organization. By 1959, then, MacIntyre was, simultaneously, a key contributor to the main New Left journals, a member of a revolutionary socialist organization, as well as a member of the Church of England. It was, broadly, in and through these three strands that MacIntyre developed his most significant Marxist works during this period. Beyond these, in more mainstream philosophical

journals, MacIntyre addressed the explanation of human action. While Marxism was often not the subject-matter in journals such as *Philosophy* and *The Philosophical Review*, these too influenced his more specifically Marxist works. As discussed earlier, his religious commitment and his attraction to Marxism provided the foundations for M:AI. The other two strands each provided a forum through which MacIntyre presented some of his most valuable ideas. The NR published *Notes from the Moral Wilderness*' in 1958/1959, while it was in the pages of the Trotskyist *Labour Review* that *Freedom and Revolution* was published a year or two later in 1960. The third of MacIntyre's great Marxist essays during this period was written the same year—*Breaking the Chains of Reason* appeared in an edited collection *Out of Apathy* by one of the coeditors of *The NR*, Edward Thompson. Although these essays (in particular NFTMW) and the debates that they contributed to will be the standpoint for the discussion I do not, however, remain purely within the confines of these journals. The debates developed within these journals have much broader, more significant implications for Marxism specifically and ethics more generally, so a certain amount of digression is required.

The tumult of 1956 and all it carried with it provided the context to Edward Thompson's rallying cry in the very first edition of The *NR*. Thompson's *Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Philistines* was an attempt to:

> Place… once again real men and women at the centre of socialist theory and aspiration, instead of the resounding abstractions – the Party, Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, The Two Camps, the Vanguard of the Working-Class – so dear to Stalinism. (Thompson 1957, p. 109)

Thompson, along with coeditor John Saville, was a dissident Communist who had become disillusioned with the CPGB and resigned following the Soviet invasion of Hungary. *The NR*, in particular, was concerned with the task of debating alternatives to the inadequacies of Stalinism. While the ULR grouping, it has been argued, was more influenced by the British–French invasion of Suez, it was Hungary that provided the key motivations for those more closely linked with the NR (Kenny 1995, p. 19). The *NR* has been characterized more generally for the 'harder' political commitments of both its editors and readers, while the ULR was more concerned with sociological and literary criticism, with less of a commitment to active politics and trade unionism (Young 1967). Either

way, it is undoubtedly true that the attempt to rescue Marxism from what was undoubtedly the 'deadening grip' of Stalinism (Blackledge and Davidson 2008b, p. xlix) was a key aim of the NR. As alluded to above, the NR journal was broadly 'humanist' in its approach to, and understanding of, socialism, clearly as a reaction to the mechanized, dehumanized aberration of Stalinism. Theoretically, many of the most interesting debates that emerged from within the *NR* were clustered around this idea of socialist humanism and its highly contested place within Marxist thought. This is because it is through, not only some of the great *defences* of the humanist element of socialism, but also the fundamental *inadequacies* of some such approaches, that we can best understand the importance of MacIntyre's contributions.

The first of MacIntyre's most significant Marxist essays during this period was the two-part essay NTFMW. This was a contribution to a debate concerning the nature, prospects and deformations of socialism, started by Thompson, and developed by others, within the pages of The *NR*. It is vital, in order to understand the power of MacIntyre's arguments, to contextualize MacIntyre's contribution by framing it as an attempt to diagnose the inadequacies of the moral responses to Stalinism from within the resources of socialism. Therefore, it is important to begin with a discussion of those responses. Later, I also characterize MacIntyre's work in this period as making a key contribution within Marxist circles to the debates concerning structure and agency. This involves widening the area of focus to include later contributions that developed some of these earlier discussions—in particular the work of Louis Althusser and the later work of Thompson. I argue that it is through recognizing and potentially moving beyond some of the problems associated with both sides of that debate that MacIntyre's contribution develops further significance.

Thompson's own contribution can be understood as covering four important, interrelated areas within socialist thought. Firstly, the relationship of The Soviet Union to socialism; secondly, an analysis of Stalinism; thirdly, the relationship of Stalinism to the work of Marx and Engels through Lenin; fourthly, a discussion of the positive content of the New Left's revolt against Stalinism, namely socialist humanism. Thompson's rejection of democratic centralism was influenced by Ken Alexander's earlier critique in a 1956 edition of The *Reasoner* (the predecessor to The *NR*). (Blackledge 2007, p. 219) Alexander's and Thompson's assumption that the USSR was in some way socialist informed the New Left's

rejection of Leninism; essentially, the acceptance of the orthodox position (within the CPGB and the Stalinist parties) that there could be a peaceful transition to socialism meant, on this interpretation, that Leninism was redundant in an era of gradual rather than revolutionary change. Indeed, the only role that a Leninist party could take in a postcapitalist society would be to degenerate this newly founded social-democratic regime (Blackledge 2007, pp. 219–220).

Thompson's own critique was rooted in the claim that Stalinism was based on an inadequate and mechanical understanding of the relationship between base and superstructure. One of the 'cardinal falsehoods' (Thompson 1957, p. 108) of Stalinism was to treat those superstructural aspects of society—law, politics, agency, etc.—as no more than a reflection, a causation, of the dominant economic base. This meant, practically, Stalinism denied the importance of agency, of human beings, in shaping the historical process through their actions, ideas and attitudes. Stalinism championed the role of impersonal economic forces as the driver of history, imputing a fundamentally mechanical conception of historical change that operated independently of conscious human action (Thompson 1957, p. 113). One consequence of this, Thompson argued, was that Stalinism possessed an inherent anti-intellectualism. Any conscious challenge to Stalinist versions of socialism, any conflict of intellectual ideas, was viewed from this perspective as a last 'desperate rallying' of a dragging-behind, irrational, irritating 'penumbra of illusions' of the old superstructure (Thompson 1957, pp. 111, 114). More broadly, it allowed for any resistance to the making of 'socialism' to be quashed in the name of historical progress—nothing can, nor should, stand in the way of the mechanical march toward freedom. As Thompson puts it, it is much easier to be inhumane if one adopts a *non-human* model of historical change drained of any conception of human agency (Thompson 1957, pp. 114, 115). For Thompson, the atrocities of Stalinism are justified by their perpetrators' self-image of acting 'as the instrument of historical necessity' (Thompson 1957, p. 120). The party itself, guided by this mechanistic view of history, became the moral crucible, the only center of moral authority. Where previously, conscience was held by individuals and communities, Stalinism ensured that the party became the sole representative and trustee of moral values. Loyalty to anything else, to humanity itself, was swallowed up by history in the form of the party as being the vehicle through which the march to socialism was to occur.

Thompson was, of course, a very fine historian and an eloquent and vociferous opponent of Stalinism throughout his life. His humanism, too, as a rallying cry to reassert the humanist core of Marxism, particularly in the context of the aftermath of 1956, was a significant contribution to the emerging new left debates. Yet, theoretically, there were some significant areas of contestation around his interpretation of Marxism, of humanism, and of the nature of The Soviet Union. One of Thompson's key assertions was that the 'economic automatism' (Thompson 1957, p. 112) so evident, as we have seen, in the Stalinist view of history has its roots in Marx. Specifically, it is—to employ MacIntyre's terminology from 1953—the 'scientific' Marx that Thompson has in mind here. The preface to Marx's 1859 *A Contributions to the Critique of Political Economy* contains a summary of what Marx called his 'guiding principle' to his materialist theory of history:

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. (Marx 1977)

Thompson is quick to point out that Stalinism's 'vulgarization of ideas', in attributing both a mechanical view of historical change and of the relationship between economy and society to historical materialism, is not how Marx understood this relationship. When Marx asserts that 'social being determines consciousness', argues Thompson, he understood this as a much more complex, less deterministic, relationship.

So while consciousness 'takes its form' from the class structure of society, to assert this is not to suggest any kind of linear or mechanical relationship between the two. Indeed the way that life is experienced goes beyond any simple class framework. Other factors and influences—cultural, familial, national, etc.—come together and intertwine to provide a complexity of experience that means very different ideas and beliefs can emerge and are reflected from the same class circumstances. A crucial point is to understand that the term 'reflection' is not employed here in any automatic or passive sense for Marx, notes Thompson. Reflection is an active, rather than passive process, through which men think creatively about their experiences and then act on those experiences. This means that individuals, even in class society, are never simply victims of their environment but always to some extent an 'agent in history' (Thompson 1957, p. 113). The relationship between social being and consciousness is, from this perspective, a fundamentally dialectical one.

However, while Thompson made a clear distinction between the way that Marx understood this process and how it degenerated into a passive, automatic model with Stalinism, he nevertheless saw the root of the problem in Marx and Engels. This was because; in trying to explain their theory of history and the relationship between being and consciousness, Marx and Engels adopted a fundamentally inadequate model of base and superstructure:

> they expressed them as a make-belief 'model', the "basis" of social relations (in production) and the "superstructure" of various branches of thought, institutions, etc., arising from it and reacting upon it. In fact, no such basis and superstructure ever existed; it is a metaphor to help us to understand what does exist—men, who act, experience, think and act again. It turns out that it is a bad and dangerous model, since Stalin used it not as an image of men changing in society but as a mechanical model, operating semi-automatically and independently of conscious human agency. (Thompson 1957, p. 113)

On this view, Marx and Engels were partially responsible for Stalinism's reification of 'blind, nonhuman, material forces' (Thompson 1957, p. 114) through their introduction of an essentially nonhuman metaphor to explain human actions. Marx's 'clumsy, static model', suggests Thompson, was fundamentally inadequate in explaining and framing the nuances of Marx's own thought and became a dangerous abstraction

in the hands of Stalin. It contributed, in effect, to the dehumanization of the historical process that was later seized upon and developed into Stalinism in practice. The important question that Thompson raises here is: what is the relationship, if any, between Marx and Engels and Stalinism? Thompson's answer is clearly that the theoretical inadequacies of the base and superstructure metaphor, at least to some extent, explain the nature of Stalinism. This is the first of two interrelated, problematic assumptions made by Thompson here. The second, that the USSR was a form of socialism, will be discussed shortly, and both can be questioned through the lens of MacIntyre's own interpretation of Marxism in the late 1950s.

MacIntyre, in NFTMW, understands the base and superstructure quite differently. He rejects not only the Stalinist caricature of Marxism but also any kind of unequivocal link between Marx and Stalin, as Thompson suggests. MacIntyre argues that the relationship between base and superstructure is:

> fundamentally not only mechanical, it is not even causal … What the economic basis, the mode of production does is to provide a framework within which superstructures arise, a set of relations around which the human relations can entwine themselves, a kernel of human relationships from which all else grows. The economic base of society is not its tools, but the people co-operating using these particular tools in the manner necessary to their use, and the superstructure consists of the social consciousness moulded by and the shape of this co-operation. (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 98)

We can immediately recognize two fundamental aspects to MacIntyre's interpretation of this relationship. Firstly, that he is placing human agency at the center of the relationship between base and superstructure; secondly, that this relationship is neither mechanistic nor overly determined, questioning Thompson's own assumptions. By refuting the rigidity and causality of the relationship between base and superstructure, MacIntyre is simultaneously refuting a Stalinist means-ends conception of morality which concentrates simply on the economic base with the superstructure effectively taking care of itself. Similarly, by placing human agency at the center of the economic base and attributing a specifically human aspect to the superstructure and its *relationship* to that base, MacIntyre dissolves the rigid Stalinist separation between base and superstructure through asserting the primacy of human relationships in

shaping *both* of them. It is this assertion that consequently means that, as human agency takes precedence at every level, there can be no room for economic determinants blindly shaping the lives of those within that society; the economic base cannot be separated, contra Stalinism, from the lives of those within that society. As MacIntyre states, it is the assertion that the creation of the base and superstructure are 'not two activities but one' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 98). The Stalinist misinterpretation of this relationship rested on the assertion that the base was *causally* related to the superstructure as such. MacIntyre, however, argued that, although *elements* of the base may be causally related to *elements* of the superstructure, the expanding of this notion to attribute causality to the relationship between base and superstructure *as such* was a false representation of Marx. Despite not addressing Thompson directly here, the essence of MacIntyre's argument is that aspects of his argument do not stand. This is largely because of his insistence that Stalinist interpretations of the base and superstructure relationship could be identified as rooted in the work of Marx.

If the economic base is constituted only by the actions of those people who form it, it can only be defined primarily by what is being done *by* and *to* those people. In other words, if human agency is the core—*the base as well as the superstructure*—of socialism, then Thompson's characterization of the Soviet Union as a form of socialism becomes untenable. Consequently, the importance of MacIntyre's interpretation of the base—superstructure model was that it opened up the possibility to question Thompson's assumption that the USSR was in some way socialist, albeit in a distorted form. Thompson had argued that 'mankind is caught up in the throes of a revolutionary transition to an entirely new form of society' (Thompson 1957, p. 105). Despite the institutional, political and moral degenerations of Stalin's rule, the USSR, however distorted, was nonetheless a form of socialism. For Thompson, Stalinism was a distorted and distorting ideology that had 'contorted the features of socialist man' (Thompson 1957, p. 138) and against which Communism had to reassert its true, humanist form.

Yet, on MacIntyre's interpretation of base—superstructure in Marx, if socialism is stripped of its human core, if it becomes mechanical, technological, dehumanized, both in its outlook and its relationship to the human beings that constitute it, it is no longer socialism. Thompson therefore made the mistake of assuming that it was only the superstructural elements of Stalinism—such as its politics—that was degenerate and

the economic base was still essentially socialist. MacIntyre broke with this through asserting that neither superstructure nor base was socialist on Marx's terms. He arguably succeeded, as Blackledge notes, in rescuing the revolutionary core of Marx's theory (Blackledge 2005, p. 719) from the inadequacies of both the Stalinist caricature and the mistaken anti-Stalinist tendency to trace a link from Marx to Stalin.

Thompson's characterization of the Soviet Union as socialist forms the foundations of Harry Hansen's critical response to Thompson. Hansen, it must be noted, contributed to the discussion in the pages of *The NR* before MacIntyre's NFTMW. Yet, while Hansen's was a significant contribution to New Left debates in its own right, it is through MacIntyre's observations about Hansen's—and others—inadequate moral framework, that we can further understand the significance of the foundational arguments of NFTMW in this context. Hansen, commenting on Thompson, notes that:

> You yourself hold that the advance [to socialism] is real, for your statement that the 'Soviet Union is a socialist country' is obviously made in the context of moral approvement of socialism. (Hansen 1957, p. 84)

The consequence for Thompson, in accepting that the advance toward socialism is real, is that it renders his moral position questionable as well as inconsistent. This is highlighted when Hansen notes that the Stalinist, in opposition to this, takes a consistent position with regard to Marxist morality. He states of the Stalinist that:

> The only objection they can have to any behaviour that is conventionally labelled immoral is that it does not, in fact, contribute to the reality of their revolutionary purposes. (Hansen 1957, p. 82)

Hansen is not defending the Stalinist position rather he is simply stating that in moral terms it is generally consistent. From this perspective, an action is judged as either moral or immoral simply in terms of whether it contributes to the furthering of the revolutionary cause. The means are consistently subordinated to the ends of revolutionary activity therefore the moral position, however undesirable, is free from any contradiction. In contrast, argues Hansen, Thompson has implicitly adopted a contradictory moral position through his acceptance that what was happening in Russia was a form of socialism and that socialism is morally desirable. This

leaves Thompson in a difficult, even untenable, position. Hansen contrasts the values of Communism that Thompson would approve of to the values of Stalinism in order to illustrate how, even from a position such as Thompson's, he is forced into the contradictory moral position of accepting that such undesirable ends as Stalinism can come from the desirable means of Communism. Hansen emphasizes this contradictory moral position:

> When you turn from this picture ('a party that practices internal democracy, respects human dignity, encourages creative political and artistic expression') to a much less ornamental reality, you are compelled to admit that a Communist party whose practice has displayed, to say the least, few of these characteristics, has succeeded in doing something of which you fundamentally approve. (Hansen 1957, p. 84)

Thompson's key weakness is the contradictory moral position he takes with regard to its inability to explain the implicit assumption that undesirable ends—Stalinism—can come from the initially desirable standpoint of Communism. If, as Thompson argues, the end of Communism is 'but a human end', how can this assertion of the humanity of Communism be satisfactorily equated with the inhuman methods of Stalinism? Thompson's position seems to imply that Stalinism, however terrible, can be regarded as a deviation from the path toward Communism. This contains the further implication that, if Communism was still achievable within the Soviet Union, those abhorrent means used to achieve it are still, ultimately, means to its achievability nevertheless. This, for Hansen, meant that Thompson had incorporated a consequentialist ethics into his arguments which tended to subordinate the means to the ends and therefore failed to provide a satisfactory moral framework from which to criticize Stalinism. In response, John St John focuses on what he sees as the overly negative conclusions for Marxism that Hansen arrives at, yet this serves only to mask the more significant point about moral incoherence. Hansen is only too aware that a 'modicum of faith' is required (St. John 1957, p. 104), yet he understands, much like MacIntyre, this faith cannot be a blind faith that is not critical and self-reflecting. Neither can it be a faith that pushes us into equating, at least without proper reflection, Stalinism with Marxism. This is the continued importance to ethical debate of Hansen's essay and if the tone of his essay is a 'despairing cynicism' (St. John 1957, p. 103) then this is certainly understandable considering the historical context in which it was written.

At this point, MacIntyre enters the debate. As alluded to earlier, the significance of NFTMW goes beyond the boundaries of the debates to which it initially contributed. It is a crucial essay in providing an initial discussion of some of the fundamental inadequacies of modern moral philosophy that have preoccupied MacIntyre throughout his intellectual genesis. As others have suggested, it is a stepping stone to AV that, in 1958, was unable to provide a coherent solution to the problems that it highlighted. This is indeed MacIntyre's contemporary view of his own work during this period. Yet I would also argue this is to somewhat downplay its significance. NFTMW remains an important work in its own right, particularly when read in conjunction with some of MacIntyre's other works during this period and especially if one does not regard the development of a Marxist ethics as a redundant task.

NFTMW should be understood as a contribution to a debate that recognized not only the inadequacies of the consequentialist approach assumed by Thompson but also of the assumed Kantian framework of the critic of Stalinism, as adopted by Hansen in his reply. What is important here, for MacIntyre, is that these inadequacies are not simply individual errors; they are reflective of modern society's own dominant modes of defective moral reasoning. The 'moral wilderness' is therefore a situation that we all find ourselves in and, in attempting to find our way out, we usually assume one of the two positions identified by MacIntyre. The Stalinist and the ex-Stalinist therefore represent aspects of the consciousness of all of us as we move between different, inadequate conceptions of moral reasoning.

MacIntyre begins his critique by characterizing the weaknesses attributed to these two positions in terms of their weak conception of morality itself. The Stalinist, as Thompson also argued, subordinates morality to the historical process through its mechanical model of history that replaces human agency with dogmatic theory. The problem with this is that 'the 'ought' of principle is swallowed up by the 'is' of history' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 91). Morality becomes, on this interpretation, something to be transcended, ignored or discarded. The alternate position, the liberal critic of Stalinism, is a position that abstracts morality completely from the historical process and invokes timeless, Kantian principles through which he can make his moral judgments. This is the implicit criticism of Hansen that MacIntyre develops. Hansen's criticism of Thompson's consequentialist ethics is made from a position that, following Kant, treats morality as something autonomous and without a

historical basis. In retreating from history and society, the liberal critic enters the realm of incommensurability. The problem with this position is that 'the individual confronting the facts with his values condemns, but he can only condemn in the name of his own choice' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 93) Wrenched out of history and context, morality is reduced to a matter of competing, incommensurable moral positions. Kantianism assumes that the values and moral frameworks it adopts are universal. Yet this is a fundamental failing of Kant, argues MacIntyre, and one that he has always maintained. In AV, for example, MacIntyre again criticizes the *assumed* universality of Kantian liberalism, arguing that it is not universal but rather a *particular* conception of rationality, owing to Kant's background and upbringing that *masquerades* as a universal conception (MacIntyre 2007, p. 45).

Returning to NFTMW, MacIntyre, in a brilliant passage criticizing Kolakowski, consequently points toward fundamental weaknesses in the position held by the ex-Stalinist (liberal) critic who retains a distinctly Kantian conception of morality:

> Kolakowski and others like him stress the amorality of the historical process on the one hand and the moral responsibility of the individual in history on the other. And this leaves us with the moral critic as a spectator, the categorical imperatives which he proclaims having no genuine relationship to his view of history. One cannot revive the moral content within Marxism by simply taking a Stalinist view of historical development and adding liberal morality to it. (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 93)

It is necessary to elaborate on this critique of Kolakowski. MacIntyre's search for a third moral position in NFTMW has to be understood also as a response to what he regarded as a fundamental weakness in Kolakowski's critique of Stalinism. Kolakowski argued that an acceptance of the 'amorality of the historical process' meant that the responsibility of moral actions lays squarely at the feet of those individuals engaged in revolutionary activity in what was undoubtedly a genuine rejection of Stalinism (Kolakowski 1969, p. 160). MacIntyre, as we shall see, makes a double-rejection of this argument in terms of neither seeing the historical process as fundamentally amoral nor regarding individual actions as a coherent basis for morality. It is this assumption that the historical process is fundamentally amoral that is characteristic of both the Stalinist theory of history

and of Althusser's anti-humanism and it is this mistake that MacIntyre highlights. Kolakowski argues that 'we profess the doctrine of total responsibility of the individual for his deeds and of the amorality of the historical process' (Kolakowksi 1969, p. 160). He attempts to solve the ethical problems created by an amoral historical process with the actions and choices of those individuals within it—or, to put it as MacIntyre did, by 'adding liberal morality to it' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 93). It is these two fundamental flaws concerning the amorality of the historical process and the adding of universal, Kantian principles in order to transform the amoral into the moral that MacIntyre opposed. MacIntyre reiterates his argument that liberal morality cannot simply be added to a Stalinist conception of history in the preface to the third edition of AV nearly fifty years later (MacIntyre 2007, pp. xvii–xviii).

Kolakowski tries to simultaneously argue that what emerges from the historical process is amoral, as well as reducing morality down to decisions and responsibilities of individuals. This leaves Kolakowski unable to escape MacIntyre's moral wilderness. Kolakowski argues that, as moral individuals, we 'have the power to choose freely' (Kolakowski 1969, p. 160). But choose what? Based on whose morality? These are the questions that concern MacIntyre in NFTMW and are questions that continued to concern him in AV and beyond. Kolakowski's position is an affirmation that what emerges from history cannot be moral—a Stalinist position according to MacIntyre—with a sprinkling of liberal morality added, designed to neutralize the moral problems of this inherent Stalinism. Kolakowski states: 'It is not true that our philosophy of history decides our main choices in life, they are determined by our moral sense' (Kolakowski 1969, p. 161). Yet where does this 'moral sense' come from? For this question, Kolakowski has no answer. Unlike MacIntyre, Kolakowski resorts to a peculiar mixture of determinism and liberalism to assert the primacy of individual choice and simultaneously the amorality of the historical process. Kolakowski's call to 'moral sense', as admirable as it may appear in its critique of Stalinism, is just another competing moral position, rendered mute by his inability to recognize that it is 'what emerges in history' which must provide us with 'a basis for our [moral] standards' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 100).

MacIntyre notes that a consequence of a position such as Kolakowski's, regardless of intention, is that it does nothing but reinforce the established order. He states that:

> The isolation of the moral from the factual, the emphasis on choice, the arbitrariness introduced into moral matters, all these play into the hands of the defenders of the established order. (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 94)

The reinforcement of the dominant position in liberal society concerning morality, of individual choice abstracted from the historical process, is perpetuated with this conception of morality. The necessarily isolated position which the adoption of such an individualistic moral position entails serves only to reinforce the established order with an affirmation of its values. The adoption of such a moral position guarantees that there can be no 'shared moral image' within society (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 94). MacIntyre reframes the debate concerning Stalin in such a way as to identify the overall moral position from which the Stalinist critic is arguing as being one that is counterrevolutionary. MacIntyre continues his dual-critique when he puts forward the assertion that the Stalinist and the anti-Stalinist position share more in common than would initially be thought in terms of what they defend and attack. The Stalinist caricature of Marxism is taken by the anti-Stalinist to be, at its essence, a fault that can be attributed to Marxism in general. The result, and also use, of this association of Stalinism with Marxism is that it 'provides the straitjacket within which it is possible to confine and misrepresent the Marxist alternative to liberal morality' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 95). What the liberal critic thinks he is criticizing is Marxism as such and, equally, what the Stalinist thinks he is defending is Marxism as such.

The problem here is that both are essentially either defending or attacking the same distorted conception of Marxist theory so that neither is able to contribute usefully to a debate concerning a genuine Marxist moral position. This is another point that MacIntyre criticizes Hansen for—his assumption that Marxism is fundamentally mechanical in its approach. It leads Hansen, claims MacIntyre, to argue that 'the essence of the Marxist ethic … is its futurism' (Hansen 1957, pp. 80–81). This is a logical argument, as MacIntyre recognizes, from Hansen's conception of Marxism. If it was true that Marxism was inherently deterministic it would simply be a matter of pulling the right levers in order to achieve the final end of Communism and therefore to label Marxist morality as 'futurist' would not be inaccurate. The problem is that the basis of Hansen's assumptions is fundamentally flawed in its inability to distinguish the mechanical model of Stalinism from the method of Marx. For

MacIntyre, this anti-theoretical approach is a consequence of the dominant tendency to reject a theory of history more generally in response to the rejection of a Stalinist theory of history more specifically. MacIntyre is careful to distinguish between a rejection of a Stalinist theory of history and, at this stage, a rejection of a Marxist theory of history. He states, in 1960s BTCOR:

> If we think of society as a machine and recognise that we are part of society, then to discover the mechanics of social change is to discover those laws of which we are the victims as much as anyone else. If on the other hand we think of knowledge of mechanics as affording us levels of change; we at once have to think of ourselves as outside the machine, operating it, as a part 'superior to society'… to conceive of ourselves as acting to change society is at once to recognise the inapplicability of the machine model to ourselves. (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 146)

Again, the key influence here is Marx's ToF which, as we saw earlier, was central to the young MacIntyre's thought and remains so in his contemporary work. The inadequate model of history and society is outlined in Marx's third thesis:

> The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. (Marx 1969)

With the rejection of any sort of general theory of society as 'nonsensical' (distinguished from a particular rejection of a mechanical theory) comes the rejection of the possibility of distinguishing a Marxist morality. These concerns are central to MacIntyre's arguments as he states that in order to find a third moral position it is vital to provide a general theory of history that does not collapse into Stalinist determinism. The vindication of the possibility of a general theory of society is nothing more, argues MacIntyre at this stage, than 'replacing a misconceived but prevalent view of what Marxism is by a more correct view' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 97).

MacIntyre's search for a third moral position between the inadequate moral frameworks discussed was predicated on two key aspects of Marxism. His interpretation of the base–superstructure relationship,

as we have seen, was an attempt to move beyond the consequentalism inherent in Thompson's approach, as well as the Stalinist caricature. Yet if Marxism was to move beyond the incoherence of the typical liberal alternatives, it needed grounding in history. The second essential aspect to MacIntyre's Marxism was his restating and defence of Marx's theory of human nature. Historicized, and located in the class struggle, human nature might provide the foundations for a Marxist morality that could move beyond the amorality of Stalinism and the incoherence of Kantianism. When MacIntyre states that 'human nature is not a pious addendum to his [Marx's] economic analysis' he is simultaneously making both a particular criticism of the Stalinist method and a more general criticism of the Kantian dualist method of viewing particular aspects of a totality, such as the economic, in isolation from their relationships with its other aspects. As Goldmann, who MacIntyre admired greatly, argued:

> Ends, means, groups, individuals, parties, masses, etc, are for dialectical thought the constituent elements of a dynamic totality;, within which the greatest necessity is to combat, in every concrete situation, the ever recurring danger of the primacy of one or other of them in relation to the others and to the whole. (Goldmann 1968, p. 12)

The Stalinist and the Kantian positions are guilty of assigning this primacy to the economic base, in terms of their tendency to subordinate Marx's concept of human nature to the economy. The consequence of such an approach is that human nature and human action are regarded as causally and rigidly determined by the economic foundations of a particular society. With particular reference to Stalinism, this means that the importance of how human nature is related to the economic base in a complex and nondeterministic way is substituted for a much more rigid, causal relationship. Importantly, this places the issue of the development of the consciousness of those within that society as being *outside* the influence of human agency. For MacIntyre, to overemphasize the importance of Marx's purely economic theories and to abstract them from his overall theory of human nature necessarily misses the crucial way that Capitalism appropriates and develops this human nature. MacIntyre argues that Marx inherited a conception of the human essence from Hegel and historicized it. He states that 'human life is not a realisation of this essence because human life is always limited in ways characteristic of the basis of the given form of society' (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 100). What this

means is that our human essence, or nature, is never strictly universal, it is always both formed and restricted by the particular type of society in which it develops. This point is developed further by MacIntyre in BTCOR when he states that:

> Freedom is not something which at any given moment men either do or do not possess; it is always an achievement and always a task. The concrete content of freedom changes and enlarges from age to age in the dialectical growth of human nature, what was the freedom of the past may be the slavery of the present. (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 140)

In the late 1950s and into the early 1960s, MacIntyre's political optimism stems from how he sees human nature and capitalism interacting. MacIntyre's Hegelian-Marxist understanding of human nature is significant in that it provides the foundations for his search for a 'third moral position'. Without it, as evidenced by his eventual rejection of biology as a basis for ethics (MacIntyre 1991), the project necessarily collapses into moral incoherence. As Pinkard points out, the historical process, in order to be historical in the Hegelian sense, is essentially constituted—becomes genuine history—by thinking about itself in a particular (self-conscious) way—that of the way in which it embodies freedom (Pinkard 1988, pp. 155–156). The relationship between man and freedom is essential to the Hegelian and Marxist characterization of history; freedom itself is a fundamental aspect of man and of history. If Hegel without Marx is unrealistic, Marx without Hegel becomes mechanical and dehumanized (MacIntyre 1958c, p. 42).

To say that freedom is the essence of man is, for MacIntyre as with Marx, to identify that element which specifically distinguishes humans from any other animal species (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 124). The pursuit of freedom is represented by those concepts of consciousness such as desire, intention and choice, of which only human beings are in possession of. As Marx in the *1844 Manuscripts* puts it:

> The animal is immediately identical with its life-activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is its life-activity. Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life-activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity. (Marx 1988, p. 76)

Freedom does not simply exist as an abstract concept, rather, it is a concept that is formed by the activity of human beings; it is the name given to that which constitutes specifically human activity, changing as it does, as historical and social conditions also change. Kosik makes the point that 'freedom is not a state, but rather an historical activity that forms corresponding modes of human coexistence' (Kosik 1976, p. 147). The Marxian concepts of freedom and labor are closely interrelated; indeed, the pursuit of the specifically human initiative of freedom is inextricably bound up with the labor process which embodies that freedom. Marx conceives of freedom as an activity of self-realization embodied within a creative and productive labor process (Gould 1978, p. 102).

The close interrelationship of freedom and labor means that as productivity expands our human needs and powers also expand. As a result of this expansion in both the labor process and in our powers and needs, the potential for the realization of human freedom also expands. As MacIntyre argues, within capitalist society, productive forces have reached such a level as to expand the potential realization of freedom to an extent that was not materially possible in previous types of society. This forms the basis of the dialectical assertion that, under capitalism, although our freedom is restricted by capitalist relations, that same freedom has the potential to be realized to a greater extent than ever before.

Human nature has universal aspects yet these are always historically and socially conditioned. Marx argued that 'human nature in general' is not something that ever appeared in an abstract form, rather it is 'historically modified' in that it is shaped by specific historical conditions (Marx 1976, p. 759). Human nature 'in general' is, therefore, those common features that human share which distinguish us from other animals and are therefore part of our essence—desire, intention, choice and such, those elements which constitute part of our very substance. The point is that, historically, how these desires and intentions are manifested will change from one historical period to another so, in this sense, they are 'transcendental' but they never exist in an abstract, absolute form. Even our most basic biological functions occur in, and are modified by, our social being—our biology and our sociality interpenetrate (Sayers 1998, p. 149). The significance of this point is highlighted by Marx in the sixth thesis on Feuerbach:

> Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. (Marx 1969, p. 14)

The ToF also provides us with another aspect that Marx saw as being essential to human nature. It points toward a concept of essence, as the 'ensemble of social relations' that exists only in and through our relationships to others. Therefore, if the human essence is not reducible to that which is contained within a single individual, the essence itself must necessarily have a fundamentally social aspect to it:

> What emerges as the "essence of human nature" is not egoism, but sociality … "Sociality" as the defining characteristic of human nature is radically different from those criticized by Marx. Unlike "egoism", it cannot be an abstract quality inherent in the single individual. It can only exist in the relations of individuals with each other. (Mészáros 1970, p. 149)

According to this interpretation of Marx, it is not simply that human's desire community and sociality it is that 'sociality' itself must be an essential component of human nature. Humans cannot, nor ever have, existed without relationships with others in some form or another. At the most basic level of human society, the creation of a language and a means of communication, for example, is a testament to the socialized nature of man and are inescapable features of all but the most extreme and rare instances of human existence—such as that of one in a permanent Robinson Crusoe-like existence (Marx 1978, p. 222) So the necessity and desire for sociality is the very essence of humanity as it is a basic component of their very existence. As Kain succinctly puts it: 'since need indicates essence, the fact that human's need each other indicates that their essence is social' (Kain 1991, p. 55).

Marx makes this explicit in his early notebook comments on James Mill:

> Since human nature is the true community of men, by manifesting their nature men create, produce, the human community, the social entity, which is no abstract universal power opposed to the single individual, but is the essential nature of each individual, his own activity, his own life, his own spirit, his own wealth. Hence this true community does not come into being through reflection, it appears owing to the need and egoism of individuals, i.e., it is produced directly by their life-activity itself. (Marx 2000, p. 8)

In following Marx, when MacIntyre in 1959 discusses the 'emergence of human nature' he is referring to those aspects of human nature that are, in some form, universal to humanity (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 94). It is freedom and the pursuit of freedom, and the recognition that this freedom must be realized communally, that together form the common aspects of humanity for both Marx and MacIntyre. However, to recognize these universal aspects of human nature without locating these within history and understanding how they are essentially changeable through that history would be idealistic; it would treat the human essence as unchangeable both by history and the actions of humans themselves. Marx's position is one that recognizes that human nature has both universal and historically and socially developed aspects to it; and it is an understanding of this that is crucial to an understanding of the significance and power of MacIntyre's Marxism.

Under capitalism argues MacIntyre, unlike previous modes of production, it becomes possible to reach the full potential of our human essence in two particular ways—one material and one social. The economic hardships of Feudalism, for example, meant that the proportion of our lives that we spent simply having to survive, because of economic scarcity and primitive technology, meant that it was impossible for human beings to potentially flourish to their full potentiality as is now possible with capitalism. There are two indispensable conditions that are fundamentally necessary to the fulfillment of human potentiality, argues MacIntyre. Firstly, the material conditions, the levels of our production and our technical advancement mean that it becomes possible, without material restrictions, to potentially flourish to our full potential and reappropriate our human nature. The second precondition is a social one and is characterized by the dominant conditions of industrialization that are prevalent within the capitalist system. It is a social one and it is also a specifically class-related one. The dominant relationship under capitalism is the relationship between capitalist and worker and it is as a consequence of this relationship that the possibility for humanity to reach its potential finally becomes apparent. As MacIntyre states, 'the emergence of human nature is something to be comprehended only in terms of the history of the class struggle' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 94). It is the specific nature of Capitalism that creates the social conditions through which men can potentially begin to reach their potential:

> Capitalism provides a form of life in which men rediscover desire in a number of ways. They discover above all what they want most is what they want in common with others; and more than this that a sharing of human life is not just a means to the accomplishment of what they desire, but that certain ways of sharing human life are what they most desire. (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 95)

MacIntyre believes that there is a fundamental clash of desires between the selfish, individualistic desires characteristic of capitalism and deeper, human desires created through the collectivization and solidarity that bind people together within capitalism. In the 1950s, MacIntyre's hope is that a form of socialized desire can develop from the struggles in and against capitalism. This is essentially MacIntyre's third moral position—one where through the class struggle within capitalism, it becomes possible to move beyond the liberal conception of desire and morality as being mutually exclusive (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 96). This, for MacIntyre, is the Marxist conception of *class* morality—the discovery that what individuals want is bound up with what others within a specific class want. It is through the struggles of a particular class that individuals become aware of how to achieve those desires.

This conception of class morality is a contentious one, particularly from the perspective of socialist humanism and in the context of Stalinism. Charles Taylor, in a contemporary essay in *The NR*, was concerned that class morality in this sense presupposed a morally problematic 'unqualified duty' of taking the side of the proletariat (Taylor 1957, p. 97). Man, Taylor argued, should be valued *as man*, not only in terms of his contribution to the revolutionary cause. Communism was an insufficient basis for socialist humanism as it adopted an inadequate consequentialist moral framework:

> The means cannot be considered simply as externally related to the end, but are in a real sense part of it. If the end is to build a genuinely human society, it can only be accomplished if the values it implies are already alive among those whose historic task it is to bring this society into being. (Taylor 1957, p. 95)

Taylor's concern identifies what was clearly a tendency inherent within certain adaptations of Marxism—particularly Stalinism. MacIntyre, as we have seen, recognized that Stalinism *did* subordinate means to ends,

distilling morality into an uncritical acceptance of the revolutionary cause or discarding it completely. Yet what MacIntyre understands as class morality, at this stage, is quite different from this. Firstly, the distinction that Taylor makes between socialist humanism and Communism, if conceived in MacIntyre's Marxist terms, is a false one. Indeed, there is essentially no distinction between the two as MacIntyre sees it in the late 1950s. Class morality is human morality, therefore rooted in a humanist conception of man, precisely because it is an expression of human nature in a socialized and historicised form. As MacIntyre believes;

> The Marxist never speaks morally just for himself. He speaks in the name of whole historical development, in the name of a human nature which is violated by exploitation and its accompanying evils. (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 96)

On this interpretation, the dangers of consequentalism become, in one sense, a straw-man; means and ends are inseparable, both are expressions of human nature as manifested in the class struggle. Moral action is an expression of beliefs, values and choices; yet these, for MacIntyre, are *discovered* rather than chosen through an active social process. The basis for this 'discovery' is human nature, developing from which are the moral discoveries of the actions that should be taken in a given, concrete situation. From the individualized, isolated position assumed by the liberal, the idea of 'discovering' values and moral answers makes no sense. Yet, MacIntyre believes, it is only through such a process that the incoherence of liberalism or the anti-morality of Stalinism can be avoided.

Taylor and Thompson are perhaps reflective of a new Left tendency to readily identify a concrete link from Marx and Engels to Lenin and to Stalin. Thompson, for example, had argued that Stalinism's mechanistic method stemmed partially from Lenin's own philosophical inadequacies. The problem, from Thompson's perspective, was Lenin's conception of the relationship between being and consciousness. While Marx, despite the faults we traced earlier, generally understood this relationship in a complex and nonautomated way, Lenin, suggests Thompson, reduced consciousness to a mere 'reflection' of being (Thompson 1957, pp. 133–134). For Thompson, Lenin had slipped from the Marxian view of being determining consciousness to the much more deterministic, and patently false, view that social consciousness reflects social being. The relationship, Thompson suggested, was a simple reflective process which, as

we have seen, was at the root of the Stalinist caricature of the base—superstructure relationship. The result was that the key notion of human agency was transformed, collapsed into nothing more than an inert reflection of what Thompson, in quoting Lenin, calls the 'objective logic of economic evolution' (Thompson 1957, p. 134). The specifics of Thompson's own critique of Leninism are not entirely convincing, not least because, as Fryer points out, the selective textual approach he adopts can be countered by a much wider body of work where Lenin appears to interpret Marx very differently. Fryer notes that, rather than the static, reflective relationship between thought and reality that Thompson attributes to Lenin, there are significant examples of Lenin's understanding of this relationship as being a 'complex, contradictory zigzag, dynamic process' (Fryer 1957). For example, in the philosophical notebooks, Lenin argues that 'human consciousness not only reflects the objective world but also creates it' (Lenin quoted in Fryer 1957). Thompson's interpretation of Lenin is therefore, at the very least, contentious.

Beyond the specific debates in and between New Left theoreticians was a much wider hostility to Leninism and democratic-centralist forms of organization in general. Indeed, the 'loose milieu' (as Sedgwick called it) of the New Left was a reflection of this inherent suspicion toward such forms of political organization (Hall 2010, p. 190). An opposition and hostility to Trotskyism, too, was attributed in particular to the NR. Thompson—again—drew the link between Stalin and Trotsky, arguing that both shared the same conceptual framework of 'economic behaviourism, cult of the elite, moral nihilism' (Thompson 1957, p. 139). What were MacIntyre's views on Lenin and Trotsky at the time of writing NFTMW? We saw, in M:AI, that MacIntyre essentially conformed to the widely held view, by both Stalinist and anti-Stalinist, of tracing a link between Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Regarding Trotsky, there was little specific engagement up to this point except for several brief but critical comments shortly before NFTMW was published. All MacIntyre was prepared to say on Trotsky in 1958 was that Trotskyists shared the 'arid, seminary text-book Marxism' of the Stalinists without any of their achievements' (MacIntyre 1958c, p. 43).

In 1959, in a review of Marcuse (MacIntyre 1959b, pp. 78–79), MacIntyre was critical of the Trotskyist state capitalist thesis but he would seemingly soon change his viewpoint here. As he published NFTMW-II, MacIntyre was on the cusp of joining a revolutionary Trotskyist organization some months later (where he would quickly

change his interpretation of Trotsky), clearly distinguishing him from the anti-Trotskyist tendency within much of The New Left. We will discuss Trotskyism much more soon, as indeed would MacIntyre. On Lenin, MacIntyre had written slightly more up to this point. In keeping with the rhythm of MacIntyre's wider engagement with Marxism, the interpretation is both complimentary and critical, with the defence of revolutionary Marxism more implicit than explicit. We have already seen that, in 1953, MacIntyre traced a path from Marx and Engels to Stalin via Lenin. By 1956, in *Marxist Tracts*, MacIntyre was critical of what he saw as Lenin's polemical style as well as his 'politically enforced conformity' (MacIntyre 1956, p. 25).

Again, the assertion here was that this contributed to the way that Marxism had become 'fossilized', particularly in the hands of the Stalinists such as Zhdanov. Interestingly, here MacIntyre would briefly address some of the themes that Thompson did concerning the relationship of thought to reality and predating Epistle to the Philistines by a year. MacIntyre suggests that it is important not to take too literally the misleading, mirror image associations conjured up by the word 'reflection'. MacIntyre insists that within the Marxist theory of ideology the relationship is 'precisely not causal' here with specific reference to the relationship between the novel and the social order (MacIntyre 1956, p. 27). Yet Marxists had essentially hypostatized their conceptual frameworks, blinded themselves to their own errors and refused to consider any alternatives, convinced of their own truths. Originally legitimate modes of explanation and frameworks had become corrupted—deterministic—as a result of the co-optation of Marx's ideas by future Marxists. On this point, argues MacIntyre, Lenin held the view that both ideas and experience were 'mirrors of reality' (MacIntyre 1956, p. 28), suggesting at least some affinity with Thompson's characterization of Lenin's inadequate philosophy. Elsewhere, in 1958, MacIntyre had made a similar argument about the degradation of Marx's own philosophy in the hands of Lenin, noting that Marx's ideas were 'liable to conceptual muddle' (MacIntyre 1958a, p. 38). Lenin, being one such 'muddler', had taken on the empiricist fallacy of distilling everything down to experience, therefore missing the complexities and interrelationship between sensations, activities and behaviors (MacIntyre 1958a, pp. 38–39).

1958s *The Algebra of Revolution* published a few months before NFTMW contains the seeds of MacIntyre's growing commitment to some forms of Marxist politics. NFTMW was a significant contribution

to socialist humanism and recognition of the problems of morality, yet there is little in the way of a more concrete commitment to revolutionary Marxism, which would soon follow. Continuing his admiration for the young Marx, In *The Algebra of Revolution*, MacIntyre reiterates the importance of Hegel to Marx; indeed, MacIntyre suggests, it is only through a Hegelian-Marx that the revolutionary core of Marxism can be rescued. In jettisoning, or failing to recognize, the integral role of Hegel to Marx, later Marxists become 'rigid, mechanical, inhuman' (MacIntyre 1958c, p. 42). Marx owes to Hegel the concepts of 'freedom, reason, and consciousness' and, for MacIntyre, the rejection of Hegel amounts to rejecting un-alienated, human freedom as the goal of socialism. For MacIntyre, the specific strengths of Marx here, as we saw in M: AI, stem from the young Marx of the *1844 Manuscripts*. The specific strengths of later Marxists—namely Lenin—stem from the inspiration that they took from the young Marx, such as in Lenin's philosophical notebooks. A significant merit, argues MacIntyre, of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* (the book under review in *The Algebra of Revolution*) is that:

> it provides a framework for a revaluation of Lenin in which a change can be noted from an emphasis on the party as the revolutionary manipulator of a passive working class to emphasis on the potential revolutionary spontaneity of the working class. And this change goes along with what we may call Lenin's Hegelian conversion. (MacIntyre 1958c, p. 43)

Significantly, this shows MacIntyre beginning to change his own earlier view in M: AI that Lenin conceived of revolutionary leadership in a top-down, elitist manner. Here, the relationship is much closer to Marx's conception of revolutionary practice as outlined in the third Thesis, opposed, as it is, to dividing society into two parts one of which is superior to the other. MacIntyre therefore eventually goes full circle, moving from a negative, to a much more positive understanding of Lenin, then back to a more critical assessment in his contemporary position (despite a continuing admiration for aspects of Lenin and his thought).

As previously suggested, in NTFMW MacIntyre takes from Hegel the idea that freedom is the essence of man. Socialism, extending this view, is the 'victory of consciousness over its previous enslavement by economic and political activity' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 56). This displays relatively little change in terms of the philosophical foundations of socialism that

MacIntyre adheres to from 1953 until 1958. What is beginning to be added to this is a conception of revolutionary activity, rooted in some preliminary assertions about the role and nature of the party that further concretizes these foundations. This is confirmed implicitly through MacIntyre joining the SLL and more explicitly through the articles that he was to write over the next couple of years. Even in NFTMW, while not as explicit, there is the assertion by MacIntyre that we can only move from 'I' to 'we' through 'the whole Marxist theory of class struggle' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 93). Even while remaining quite critical of Marxism, particularly Marxists after Marx, there is a growing recognition in MacIntyre of the necessity to develop and maintain a political commitment to a revolutionary organization.

Before we come back to Lenin and Trotsky, for now, we return to NTFMW to pick out the beginnings of another important development in MacIntyre's thought. NFTMW also attempts to synthesize (or at least remain open to) an Aristotelian conception of morality into MacIntyre's Marxism, What Aristotle provides is a direct challenge and contrast to the Kantian idea that morality and desire must always be exclusive and competing concepts. MacIntyre states that the Greek conception of the relationship between morality and desire maintained that 'the connection between the moral life and the pursuit of what men want is always preserved' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 91). It was the Aristotelian model of morality that had the potential to address the problems of morality when incorporated into the historical method and analysis of both Marx and Hegel. Yet, As Fredric Jameson notes, with Aristotle, 'there is an absence of historicity and the concept of the historical' (Jameson 1988, p. 181), the same of which cannot be said for either Marx or Hegel. Any liberal conception of morality that insisted on the division between morality and desire could never solve the moral dilemmas of the modern world as it fundamentally assumed morality and desire could never be anything else but competitors. It was doomed to a world dominated by the Hobbesian assertion that the' war of all against all' meant that, at best, there could only ever be an uneasy truce between the two. MacIntyre, by assuming a radically opposing view of the relationship of morality to desire showed, through Hegel, Marx and—if not explicitly—Aristotle, that this uneasy truce between morality and desire could potentially be transformed into a fundamentally different relationship. It was a transformation of this relationship that opened up for MacIntyre the possibility of a Marxist morality:

> Not by manipulation of people so that they will move in some direction that we desire, but by helping them to move where they desire. The goal is not happiness, or satisfaction but freedom. And freedom has to be both means and end. The mechanistic separation of means and ends is suitable for human manipulation, not for human liberation. (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 163)

MacIntyre's incorporation of an Aristotelian element into his Marxist morality enables him to provide a valuable counter to Nietzschean arguments concerning the nature of morality. We can see that MacIntyre's historical method and analysis are formed from both Marx and Hegel, yet his assertion that we must heal 'the rift between our conception of morality and our conception of desire' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 93) has its roots in Aristotle. I would not wish to attribute to MacIntyre a position that, at this early stage in his development, was in any way more Aristotelian that Marxist—or one that was even explicitly Aristotelian. There is an important distinction between the earlier and the later MacIntyre here. For, although recognizing the importance of Aristotle's conception of the relationship between morality and desire in the late 1950s, the prognosis for the moral wilderness is, as we have seen, resolutely Marxian in character. The Aristotelianism that would emerge more clearly in works such as AV is of far less importance to these earlier and definitively Marxist works. However, unlike Tony Burns has argued (Burns 2010), I would not necessarily separate the early Marxism of MacIntyre in this period completely from Aristotle as there is surely a certain affinity with ancient Greek philosophy generally and Aristotle specifically in the way that MacIntyre conceives of the relationship between morality and desire.

MacIntyre's assertion of the importance of making the connection between morality and desire did not develop only through discussions of Marx and Aristotle. Away from Marxism—though never, perhaps, too far away—MacIntyre was conducting philosophical inquiries within the pages of journals such as *Philosophy* and the *Philosophical Review*. Indeed, while Marxism was the vehicle through which the rift between the two might be healed, MacIntyre's philosophical influences reached beyond Marx on a number of wider philosophical questions as we shall see later. For now, it is important to initially draw attention to another essay published contemporaneously with NFTMW. In 1959s *Hume on 'is' and 'ought'*, MacIntyre develops an argument that suggests, contrary to the dominant interpretation, Hume did indeed think that you could derive

an 'ought' from 'is'. MacIntyre shows how Hume contrasts starkly with Mill to illustrate this point. Mill's utilitarianism, argues MacIntyre, is representative of a shift in philosophical ethics to a situation where moral judgments are formed independently of the facts. Morality has become concerned with the *form* of moral judgments, appealing, as with Mill, to a 'supreme moral principle', rather than having any connection to the *content* of actions (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 116). Yet Mill's moral criterion has no necessary concrete connection to social life; the principle itself is sovereign which leaves questions as to the application and content of that principle unanalysed. This is not the case for Hume as his conception of justice is tied to its application in social life. For Hume, as MacIntyre states:

> We have moral rules because we have common interests. Should someone succeed in showing us that the facts are different from what we conceive them to be so that we have no common interests' then our moral rules would lose their justification. (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 116)

Hume, in this sense, is much closer to Marx in recognizing that morality is connected to the social order. Yet, in their analyses of that social order, Hume and Marx part company sharply. Hume argues that social morality is justified and constituted through certain common interests in society. Of course, Marx categorically denies that such a common interest exists—the example MacIntyre uses here is the distribution of property. Hume's fault, MacIntyre would later argue, was to give an account of morality based on a specific social and cultural order (MacIntyre 1971b, p. 168), meaning he essentially elevated specific interests to the level of general or common interests. Therefore Marx's denial works as a kind of immanent critique, suggests MacIntyre, in meeting Hume on his own ground and asserting that Hume's morality fails in terms of how it is justified through common interests. Nevertheless, there is important common ground between the two in terms of how they conceive of morality and the relationship between 'is' and 'ought'. Hume's target of criticism, argues MacIntyre, is a religious basis for morality; what he puts in its place—much like Marx and MacIntyre in NFTMW—is a 'foundation in human, needs, interests, desires and happiness' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 121). Hume though, like Aristotle, lacks an understanding of history; his is an essentially de-historicized conception of human nature (D'Andrea 2006, p. 21). MacIntyre concludes *Hume on 'is' and 'ought'*

by suggesting that Hume stands at a 'turning point' in history. MacIntyre portrays Hume as the pivotal figure in reasserting the link, severed through the Protestant Reformation, between morality and human nature and therefore reestablishing the Greek moral tradition of seeing morality as inseparable from desire. Severing this link was Kant who, through his classification of imperatives into categorical and hypothetical 'removes at one blow any link between what is good and right and what we need and desire' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 120). Morality must be grounded in human nature to make it intelligible. MacIntyre suggests that we cannot understand virtue without viewing it as a specifically human quality fundamentally linked to human happiness (MacIntyre 1959a, pp. 123–124). Hume on Is and Ought' is important to NFTMW as it suggests Hume's project to preserve morality as something psychologically intelligible, is a first step to understanding moral actions as human actions (Lutz 2004, p. 22).

NFTMW can therefore be understood as an attempt to outline an adequate model of human action through a defence of what MacIntyre sees as the humanist core of the young Marx's understanding of revolutionary practice, combined with his growing recognition of the inadequacies of liberalism and the necessity to reconnect morality with desire. MacIntyre's broader concern with making human action 'psychologically intelligible' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 124) also developed within more mainstream philosophical journals in the 1950s and 1960s. A particularly important essay here is 1957s *What Morality Is Not*. While there is nothing really of Marxism here, it provides an important precursor to the concerns with the incoherence of morality that is the focus of NFTMW. The position that MacIntyre is critiquing here is that outlined by R. M. Hare in his 1957 paper *Universalizability*. Specifically, MacIntyre takes issue with Hare's claim that all moral judgments are necessarily and essentially universalizable (p. 96). Hare's claim of moral universalizability, argues MacIntyre, stems from the way that he conceives of morality exclusively in terms of moral rules. Rules are essentially universal in scope, precisely because it is in the nature of rules to be so 'just because they are rules' (MacIntyre 1957b, p. 99). Yet if morality is conceived as something beyond simple rule-following it becomes clear, argues MacIntyre, that all moral judgments are not, indeed, universalizable. MacIntyre's general point is that morality is more complex, and any number of examples can be given of moral judgments in 'certain situations of moral perplexity' where it is 'logically impossible' to universalize

(MacIntyre 1957b, p. 100). The conclusion that MacIntyre draws from his argument is that moral philosophy has been neither sufficiently lexicographical nor aware of the much wider patterns of analysis necessary for explaining the nature and meaning of 'ought'.

Significantly, MacIntyre goes on to suggest that this claim to universalizability receives centrality not just in Hare, but in all liberal morality. The essence of liberal morality is its impersonality; when a moral agent judges an action, they do so in recognition of what anyone else should do in that situation, including themselves. 'Ought', in this sense, is understood as providing the ultimate guide to action, interconnecting the claim to universalizability of moral judgments with the claim that these are both practical and prescriptive (MacIntyre 1957a, p. 103). However, such a claim to universalizability, suggests MacIntyre, is a moral requirement rather than a logical requirement. It is not a logical requirement because actions can be perfectly intelligible where a moral agent appraises the actions of others by one standard but his own actions by quite another standard. Yet, from the liberal perspective, this is unintelligible; liberal morality therefore builds in a moral claim to universalizability to their conception of 'ought'. Liberal morality makes consistency between appraisals and principles morally interdependent whereas they are in reality logical independent (MacIntyre 1957b, pp. 103–104). There are two immediate problems with liberal morality that can be deduced from this. Firstly, that liberal morality is claiming an essentially objective—or logical—basis for morality, whereas the reality is that its moral framework rests on a subjective, moral claim about universalizability and the intelligibility of moral actions. As MacIntyre states:

> It is not part of the meaning of "morality" *tout court* that moral valuations are universalizable, but liberals tend to use the word "morality" in such a way that this is made part of its meaning. (MacIntyre 1957b, p. 105)

The liberal understanding of morality rests, in MacIntyre's view, on premises that make very specific, contested claims about the nature of moral judgments while simultaneously presenting those claims as logical. Secondly, and relatedly, MacIntyre states that to assert that universalizability is 'of the essence of moral valuation' (MacIntyre 1957b, p. 105) fails to tell us what morality *actually is* or how moral words are indeed used. It prescribes a particular meaning to words such as 'morality' and,

more than this, *it prescribes a morality*. An immediate problem with a prescriptive morality conceived in such a way is that it misunderstands the use and influence of maxims to our everyday lives. MacIntyre argues that maxims do not 'guide' us in the strict, prescriptive sense that liberal morality imparts to them. Rather, those actions that are the subject of moral philosophy—promise-keeping, truth-telling, etc.—are guided, not by the maxims themselves, but by our own moral agency in determining whether or not to 'abide by the conduct prescribed by the action' (MacIntyre 1957b, p. 106). The problem with this for MacIntyre, presumably, is that liberal morality not only prescribes meaning to moral words, it understands morality in the broader sense as being fundamentally a prescriptive process rather than a much more complex, social process of discovery. Liberal, prescriptive morality fails to take into account those concepts of practical consciousness that make morality a much more complex, historically and sociologically embedded process. As a result, it fails to provide any kind of concrete guide to action. MacIntyre, in NFTMW, was trying to address the problems of, as he would put it a few years later, 'the content of the moral life' and the 'contents of our actions'. Those prescriptive injunctions – to repent, to be responsible or to be generous—ultimately fail in that they do not actually tell us what to do (MacIntyre 1963, p. 24).

One way that liberal morality is inadequate is in its separation of moral and practical reasoning. This separation effectively denies that we can discover what is good and right through reference to natural inclination and desire (Lutz 2012, p. 59). MacIntyre's project in NFTMW therefore has to be partially understood as a rejection of this assumption and a Marxist attempt, influenced by other schools of thought, to sketch the premises through which desire and morality might be reconnected. Moreover, liberal morality embodies the philosophical and practical failures of individualism (Pinkard 2003, p. 189), and one way that this is represented is, as Knight suggests, by its focus on abstract 'oughts' rather than practical reasoning concerned with concrete wants (Knight 2007, p. 131). As MacIntyre was to later argue, 'characteristically modern practical reasoning' is not developed from an individual's specific role as enquirer or citizen, but from the individual as individual, unable to justify any overall theory of the human good (MacIntyre 1988, pp. 339–343).

Some of these early, more 'formal' philosophical essays show that MacIntyre sees in theory, in philosophy, the problems that themselves become manifested in social life. The problem of determinism that manifests itself with Stalinism is, as D'Andrea notes, 'not purely speculative, arising from philosophical enquiry, but arises from the very nature of the social sciences' (D'Andrea 2006, pp. 28–29). 1957s *Determinism* highlights the significance of the dilemma created by the free will/determinism dichotomy for MacIntyre and the inadequacies of the two positions into which we are seemingly forced into when addressing this issue. Either, we reject determinism and are resigned to accepting the inadequacy, the 'unscientific' nature, of the social sciences; or, and seemingly worse still, we accept determinism and, with it, the seeming irrelevance of morality and human agency—'we could not have done other than we have done' (MacIntyre 1957a, p. 29). This second response is reflected in the Stalinist anti-morality that MacIntyre characterizes in NFTMW, with the first being much closer to the liberal critic who eschews a general theory of history all together. MacIntyre's writings are attempts to escape this dilemma (D'Andrea 2006, p. 171). So while MacIntyre is carrying out his enquiries in very different arenas (compare the SLL's *Labour Review* with *Mind* or *The Philosophical Review*), they are nevertheless part of the same search for a coherent, moral framework of human action.

MacIntyre's critique of mechanistic explanations of human action develops further in another philosophical essay contemporaneous to NFTMW, 1960s *Purpose and Intelligent Action*, published from a symposium in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. Here, MacIntyre argues that mechanistic, causal explanations are fundamentally inadequate in being able to explain human behavior. While causal mechanisms might explain 'first level' general, purposive behavior common to humans and animals it fails to explain much more complex third-level intelligence unique to human beings. Third-level intelligence implies that 'the agent is capable of reflective choice, that he can pose alternatives and be criticised for selecting that which will in fact not satisfy him in the long run' (MacIntyre 1960c, p. 83). This level of intelligence embodies those concepts of 'practical consciousness' familiar from NFTMW—desire, intention, choice, belief—and the complex interplay between these concepts and social life mean causal, essentially static and *reflective*, explanations

are an inadequate model for explaining human action. Again, it is not difficult to see how this philosophically inadequate explanation of human action manifests itself politically in the inhumanities of Stalinism that represents, for MacIntyre, the pinnacle of this inadequate mode of understanding.

NFTMW was MacIntyre's attempt to locate morality within history, through a synthesis of Hegel and Marx while following Aristotle's conception of the relationship between morality and desire that set him apart from both the dominant Stalinist and Kantian interpretations of Marx. MacIntyre characterizes this synthesis by pointing to the fundamental moral problems with these two methods: 'Against the Stalinist, It is an assertion of moral absolutes, as against the liberal critic of Stalinism it is an assertion of desire and history' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 96). Against the liberal Stalinist critic, MacIntyre saw the Marxist as discovering his moral values, through historically conditioned processes and associations, rather than the individual-orientated 'choosing' of values, as characteristic of the liberal approach. Against the Stalinist, it was the refusal to equate means to ends generally and, contra Hansen, a rejection of the 'futurist' morality label that he gave to Communism. MacIntyre refuses to even bring ends and means into the moral sphere in this sense, rather, morality is something that is historicized and absolutized, based on the values that capitalism (potentially) points us toward through the processes of industrialization and collectivization. It is a class morality, shared with others with the same beliefs and desires and it is socially, as a class, that the synthesizing of morality and desire can become complete. This, from MacIntyre's perspective in the 1950s, potentially escapes the moral wilderness of the liberal critique and the determinism of the Stalinist method which denies this human nature. MacIntyre states that 'It is not that Stalinists take a different view of the moral issues which I have raised in this article. It is that within their framework of thought such issues cannot even arise' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 97). In the Stalinist position, the moral choice of men is obliterated by the objective process of history, a process that is viewed as unchangeable by the decisions of those individuals who make it. MacIntyre's ethics is therefore not only a reassertion of the importance of adequately understanding human action, it is also—arguably—a potential blueprint for showing how Marxism can develop a conception of ethics, the kind of which is unrecognizable from the self-serving conceptions of ethical and political action that it has been argued characterize modernity (Badiou 2001, p. 7).

The debates around Marxism and Humanism would not reach their peak for another decade or two. In particular, Althusser's *For Marx* at the end of the 1960s, and Thompson's scathing attack on structuralism a decade later are probably the most famous—or infamous—representatives of this debate. It is unfortunate that MacIntyre was not directly involved in these debates as he had essentially left Marx behind before even Althusser had published his work, let alone when Thompson published *The Poverty of Theory* in 1978. Nevertheless, MacIntyre's work in the late 1950s played an important and often unrecognized role in Thompson's defence of humanism and his interpretation of the base and superstructure relationship. Indeed, I would suggest that it is through MacIntyre that we can best understand the weaknesses in not only the structuralist account, yet also in certain forms of humanistic Marxism. The structure–agency debate can be understood as an extension of the debates, albeit on a more theoretical level, that MacIntyre, Thompson and others were involved in concerning the role and nature of socialism and Stalinism during the late 1950s. Furthermore, some of the criticisms that Althusser makes are reflective, in a sense, of MacIntyre's own concerns with certain kinds of Marxist humanism.

Althusser's bold restatement of historical materialism made the controversial claim that 'structures … act functionally on men via a process that escapes them' (Althusser 1969, p. 233). Althusser is making the claim that structures—economic, political, ideological—take primacy over individuals, in that individuals essentially play the role of 'supports' of the relations of production (Callinicos 2004, p. xi). The power of historical change must therefore be located primarily within these specifically non-human structures. It is this dehumanized interpretation of the historical process that is the greatest danger from a humanist perspective, an interpretation that seemingly asserts that structures exist within history without relation to human activity (Cohen 1994, p. 244).

As we have seen, on both Thompson's and MacIntyre's interpretation, the base and superstructure are themselves metaphors for human action and all aspects of human life. It is those individuals that *create* the structures to which Althusser assigns primacy and that, through their agency, possess the ability to change them. Despite, as others have argued (Magarey 1987, p. 628), Thompson's readiness to spy Stalinism everywhere, it is not difficult to see why he saw the structuralist approach as containing the same kind of failings as Stalinism.

The mechanistic determinism of Stalinism in practice was given a theoretical basis by structuralism through abstract categories, theoretically constructed, that had little time for real historical processes. This is why, as Anderson notes, Thompson accused Althusser's work of being Stalinism theorized and expressed as ideology (Anderson 1980, p. 104). Stalinism asserts the primacy of a more mechanical model, essentially endowing structures with a life of their own, thus reifying the importance of things. This consequently meant that what did actually exist—the social, moral and political relationships between real men—were swallowed up and obscured by a semi-automatic, mechanical model of society that operated, on Thompson's earlier characterization, 'independently of conscious human agency' (Thompson 1957, p. 113).

Thompson suggested that however much Althusser emphasized the inherently complex and contradictory nature of those forces at work within the base and superstructure, the structural concepts themselves are essentially conceived deterministically. He states:

> What constitutes a structuralism, in a more general sense, is (i) that however many variable are introduced, and however complex their permutations, these variable maintain their original fixity as categories…Thus the categories are categories of stasis… movement can only take place within the closed field of the system or structure… this movement is enclosed within the overall limits and determinations of the pre-given structure. (Thompson 1995, p. 113)

These categories, argues Thompson, are externally imported into Althusser's theory, unchanged and untouched by both the actions of those within the structures themselves and consequently 'empty of all social and historical content' (Thompson 1995, p. 129). This rejection of a historical approach was not specific to Althusser but was a criticism of structuralism in general. Goldmann had similar reservations on this tendency within structuralism that were directed at Levi-Strauss. As Cohen points out:

> Consciousness, like Marx's model of capitalism, must be historically placed, it is a model, but not one standing apart from history. Historical analysis in Marx, contrary to Levi-Strauss's description, is fundamental, not secondary. (Cohen 1994, p. 239)

It is the Althusserian tendency in particular, and that of structuralism in general, that creates theoretical concepts (consciousness, ideology, politics) without situating them within the historical process. Consequently, on this interpretation, structuralism cannot comprehend either the dynamism of the concept itself or the dynamism of the historical process and the interaction between the two. Theoretically, this is akin to idealism as the structural concepts themselves are applied, without any form of historical analysis or empirical interaction, to explain social changes and developments within those structures. The concepts themselves are taken as complete and are consequently deemed to be outside the influence of any further analysis, adaption, or fundamental change due to interaction with concrete social and historical processes.

This tendency within the structural position to rely too heavily on abstract, theoretical concepts is taken up in a valuable critique along very similar lines to the Thompson/Althusser debate, as made by Ellen Wood against Nicos Poulantzas. Wood argues that Poulantzas in particular and structuralism in general assert that real, concrete historical formations—such as capitalism—are made up of elements whose structural logic is theoretically determined (Wood 1995, p. 55). This implies that the relationship between the economic base and those elements of the superstructure take the form of an 'abstract–formal' rather than 'real–concrete' relationship. This is illustrated in Poulantzas's *Political Power and Social Classes* where, for Wood, Poulantzas argues that a state is capitalist if it configures with a preformulated and abstracted set of formal characteristics as corresponding, in theory, to the capitalist mode of production. Wood writes:

> This was simply an evasion of the challenge posed by Marx himself: how to encompass historical specificity, as well as human agency, while recognizing within it the logic of the modes of production. (Wood 1995, p. 59)

Thompson recognized that those concepts used to explain historical and social change are not static but dynamic, in recognition that the historical process itself—and that which changes it—is constantly changing over time. They are not idealistically imported from a theoretical position to explain historical change, as it is only through historical and social processes, human processes, that the structures themselves can be identified and analzsed. What is often overlooked in this debate concerning

structure and agency is the influence that MacIntyre had on Thompson's conception of the base and superstructure relationship (Blackledge and Davidson 2008b, p. xvii). A good example of that is the otherwise excellent discussion of this debate by Ellen Wood. Wood fails to acknowledge that it was from an earlier essay by MacIntyre that Thompson borrowed (and readily acknowledged) his interpretation of this relationship. As Wood notes, Thompson saw the base and superstructure as being a metaphor for the 'kernel of human relationship from which all else grows'. Expanded, this quote from MacIntyre provides the most satisfactory understanding of what exactly these terms of base and superstructure mean and how they interact:

> What the economic basis, the mode of production, does is to provide a framework within which superstructure arises, a set of relations around which the human relations can entwine themselves, a kernel of human relationship from which all else grows. The economic basis of a society is not its tools, but the people co-operating using these particular tools in the manner necessary to their use, and the superstructure consists of the social consciousness moulded by and the shape of this co-operation. (MacIntyre 1958b, p. 98)

In a similar way to Thompson's analysis, MacIntyre's realization that the base and the superstructure are fundamentally human creations and constituted by humans themselves, functions to prevent the type of determinism that Thompson charged Althusser with. It does so by endowing the concepts themselves—base, superstructure, etc.—with fundamentally human, dynamic and fluid qualities. Thompson expands further on this conception of the base and superstructure relationship when, in interpreting the above passage by MacIntyre, he argues that one can accept:

> The mode of production and productive relationships determine cultural processes in an epochal sense; that when we speak of the capitalist mode of production for profit we are indicating at the same time a "kernel" of characteristic human relationships—of exploitation, domination, and acquisitiveness—which are inseparable from this mode. (Thompson 1961, p. 38)

If MacIntyre ultimately provides some of the foundations on which Thompson mounts his critique of the structuralist approach, Althusser nevertheless made some important criticisms of Marxist humanism, at least in certain forms. Althusser was critical of both Stalinism and

Humanism for having a weak grasp of the totality through asserting, respectively, an overemphasis on economic factors and the role of human agency (Blackledge 2006b, p. 164). Indeed, Thompson has been criticized for holding to a generally vague conception of human agency. Perry Anderson, for example, redefines agency in terms such as 'collective projects', 'local objectives' and 'military conquests' (Anderson 1980, pp. 19–21). Anderson notes that, to distinguish between such forms of agency they must be understood in terms of 'intentional reach rather than involuntary result' (Anderson 1980, p. 20). The problem Anderson identified with a weaker conception of agency, such as Thompson's, is that it 'permit[s] a slide from one sense through sense two to sense three' (Anderson 1980, p. 21). In other words, agency cannot be properly understood unless intentionality is taken into account. Indeed, it is this intentional reach or involuntary result that permits understanding of what type of agency is involved in a particular action or actions.

Callinicos makes a similar point with regards to the structure and agency debate, arguing that the problem was the 'abstract polarity' of speaking in such general terms of 'undifferentiated agency' (Callinicos 2004, p. xxiii). In his study of Althusser and structuralism, Benton makes an observation with regards to the problem of employing an 'indeterminist philosophical category of human agency' (Benton 1984, p. 214). Benton criticizes what he understands to be the unsatisfactory character of Thompson's conception of agency; Thompson's insistence on the indeterminate character of historical processes, coupled with the assertion that those historical processes are made up of nothing but human action effectively leads to a dead-end of explanation in that these historical processes can never be known. They can never be known because, if history is nothing but the history of human beings, and 'much of the work of history is done behind the backs of human agents' then Thompson, no less so than Althusser, is incapable of explaining historical change (Benton 1984, p. 214).

Certainly, if we are to discuss exactly how change manifests itself it is important to move from the theoretical to the practical and at least to outline in more detail what is meant concretely by concepts such as structure and agency. The position that Benton assigns to Thompson is one that isolates human agency from interaction with structures and this is a questionable assertion which may not be wholly attributable to Thompson. It is only partially true that Thompson wants to assert that 'all agency is, or is reducible to individual human agency' (Benton 1984, p. 211), as this

is not to say that agency is not effected, conditioned or constrained in various ways by structural factors. It is rather to say that those structures do not possess a finality of constraint over the individuals that comprise them. A humanist perspective (as criticized by Althusser) that ignores such structures would clearly be no more able to explain historical change than Althusser's own particular brand of Marxism.

The criticisms of humanism suggested above do not apply to MacIntyre's own understanding of Marxist historical development and human agency in two interrelated ways. Firstly, as MacIntyre suggests in BTCOR, the idea that the choice is between a mechanical model of human development represented, in this case, by Althusser, or the 'dead-end' rejection of any kind of model of historical change represented by Thompson, is a false dichotomy (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 150). Marx, argues MacIntyre, did believe in a theory of historical change yet he did not believe in absolute trends of mechanical development; the positions attributed to both Thompson and Althusser are essentially caricatures of Marx's own method (as well as, in all probability, caricatures of Thompson and Althusser themselves). MacIntyre is suggesting that Marxism must explain both structure and agency; to subsume one to the other is to misunderstand Marx's method and repeat the mistake of either the Stalinist mechanical model or the liberal rejection of any theory of history all together.

Secondly, and relatedly, what MacIntyre was beginning to recognize, in his work both inside and outside Marxism, was the fundamental importance of understanding and explaining human action within a general framework of understanding historical change. MacIntyre would agree that Marxism cannot leave the category of agency unanalysed or undeveloped, yet he would strongly reject, at this stage, that Marxist humanism is inadequate to this task. Marx, argues MacIntyre, takes from Hegel those concepts of 'practical consciousness' such as desire, intention and choice (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 124); it is only in understanding human agency through the lens of these concepts that any kind of general theory of history can develop. This is not a theory in the sense of any kind of iron 'law' of history, rather, it is a recognition of limiting factors and conditioning tendencies, of which the role and explanation of human action is one integral part.

MacIntyre and Althusser, to an extent, converged in some of their criticisms of humanism. The key difference was that Althusser was attacking humanism *as such* and asserting its incompatibility with scientific Marxism;

MacIntyre's point was that a properly understood Marxist humanism *was* genuine Marxism, despite his recognition of some of the same failings of humanist Marxism that Althusser identified. One of the points of convergence between Althusser and MacIntyre was over the problem of voluntarism. Althusser, troubled by 'the ahistorical and other-worldly reflections' typical in French contemporary French philosophy (Schrift 2006, p. 41), saw in Sartre a tendency to collapse structure into the actions of individuals, failing to capture the complexity and intricacies of structural unity (Poster 1975, pp. 352–353). Society was made up of individuals yet, from Althusser's perspective, to understand society and societal change, proper historical analysis of such structures must be undertaken. The effect of not doing so, in relation to political action, was a limited understanding of developmental conditions and their effect on the possibilities and limits of that action.

This can be understood more clearly through MacIntyre's discussion of Kantianism and voluntarism, as made in 1969s *Marxism of the Will*. Here, MacIntyre links the two through a similar criticism to Althusser's critique of Sartre. The problem with an explicitly anti-structural approach is that a clear analysis of revolutionary conditions is made impossible, therefore those necessary economic, social, political and military conditions that would cause the 'inevitable downfall' of, in this case, Guevara, are ignored (MacIntyre 1969, p. 378). The effect of this tends to be to substitute theoretical analysis of these concrete conditions and replace this with 'Marxism of the will'. This 'attempt to transcend the material environment' becomes a form of both Kantianism and voluntarism (MacIntyre 1969, p. 378). It is Kantian because Guevara was forced to appeal toward a notion of 'duty', abstracted from both theoretical analysis and concrete material conditions; genuine analysis would have showed Guevara that the creation of revolutionary conditions was not possible—a truism that Guevara could not accept. It is also voluntarist because this gap between the desires of the revolutionary and the material conditions available to fulfill such desires was filled, or was attempted to be filled, through some 'gigantic and heroic act of the will' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 114). Consequently, suggests MacIntyre, Kantian moral theory became revolutionary because the individualist and voluntarist tendencies of this particular form of Marxism took precedence over the structural conditions. These structural conditions were relegated to a degree of secondary importance behind the wills of those individuals involved. The perceived individualism of Sartre and the tendencies

of voluntarism that it displayed were, for Althusser, characteristic of Marxist humanism. For MacIntyre, however, they were only characteristic of an inadequately theorized Marxist humanism. Althusser was critical of both Stalinism and Humanism for having a weak grasp of the totality through asserting, respectively, an overemphasis on economic factors and the role of human agency (Blackledge 2006b, p. 164). Yet, Althusser's attack on humanism was, at best, an attack on a weak humanism shorn of Marx's theory of history; at its worst, Althusser ianism tended toward political inactivity which, from the perspective of the first New Left, was unpalatable.

Althusser's insistence on the separation of the scientific and the ideological meant that he robbed Marxism of its revolutionary core through a rejection of political action on the grounds that they were 'ideological'. This was noted perhaps most tellingly during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, on the issue of which Althusser kept conspicuously silent. His theoretical stance 'allowed him to argue that purely theoretically, the reform movement was wrong' as it was based on values attained from concepts that, theoretically, could not coexist—socialism and humanism (Ricouer 1994, p. 49). Althusser saw history as a process, yet it was a process that acted independently of the wills, intentions, actions and political practice of those humans that were a part of that process. As Susan James puts it, 'the abolition of the subject' meant, 'rather than being regarded as actors who make their own history, individuals are to be seen as the 'supports' of social practices who maintain and produce them' (James 1990, p. 151). The problem of political impotence is further accentuated when we take into account Althusser's assertions that structures operate fundamentally independently from humans or regardless of their actions. The inevitable result of a theory such as Althusser's encourages a depressingly fatalistic perspective—'do nothing' Marxism—where what happens, happens, and there is little that we as individuals can do to change it.

If structuralism viewed history as, in some sense, a process independent of human agency, the socialist humanism debates within the first New Left, a decade earlier, were problematic in different ways. While nobody could deny the political commitments of many of the new left founders, there were real issues with the moral coherence of the committed anti-Stalinists' understanding of Marxism. MacIntyre should be understood as providing an understanding of Marxism, however

undeveloped, that might begin to address the inadequacies of aspects of humanism and its opposite, Stalinism. While Althusser was explicitly anti-Stalinist (Althusser, pp. 10, 30, 240), the structuralist approach made the same kind of errors in seemingly dissolving agency into structure. MacIntyre was trying to develop a conception of revolutionary, ethical practice that avoided the Kantianism and consequentalism inherent in the New Left; the events of 1956 which provided the context to the New Left, were crucial in developing a form of socialist humanism opposed to the mechanistic model of Stalinism in theory and practice. MacIntyre's NFTMW recognized this important development, yet what was most significant in NFTMW was its recognition of the inadequate moral frameworks that persisted in even the most ardent anti-Stalinists. The moral incoherence of modernity would later become the foundation for MacIntyre's great work, AV, yet it was over two decades earlier that these arguments were beginning to be rehearsed. Within a decade of writing NFTMW, MacIntyre would reject Marxism for being, in important ways, both politically and philosophically inadequate. Yet, arguably, MacIntyre's work in the 1950s remains valuable not simply in terms of providing the foundations to a more coherent, contemporary project, but as an important moral and political Marxist project in its own right.

MacIntyre developed an understanding of the base–superstructure model that was neither deterministic nor politically impotent in that it recognized the crucial role of human agency in determining both base and superstructure. MacIntyre's Marxism was nevertheless grounded in history, suggestive of the importance of the class struggle as being the crucible within which an objective morality and conception of informed desire might develop. In these senses, it moved beyond the weaknesses in both humanism and typical anti-humanist, structural understandings of Marxism. If M:AI was a distinctly Christian Humanist book, NFTMW represented most clearly the shift to Marxist humanism. For it is Marx, not the Gospel, a specific 'class' rather than simply 'man', who represent MacIntyre's hope for humanity at this stage. However, if NFTMW was significant in recognizing the moral inadequacies of both Stalinism and liberalism, it was not until MacIntyre joined a specifically Marxist revolutionary organization that he began to concretise these ideas more clearly. Missing from MacIntyre's Marxism in 1958 is a clear strategy of how to impinge on the class struggle. It was within a Trotskyist organization that MacIntyre would develop a much more definite commitment

to political practice in the shape of the Marxist party and its Leninist conception of revolutionary leadership. Here, MacIntyre would also begin to theorize a much clearer analysis of contemporary capitalism, the nature of the modern working class and the problem of political apathy. Here, too, in moving into the orbit of Trotskyism, MacIntyre would begin to turn theory into practice (Blackledge 2005, p. 701).

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CHAPTER 4

The Revolutionary Marxists: The Socialist Labour League and International Socialism

It is important to discuss some of the organizations that MacIntyre belonged to in order to provide some context to his views and writings. This is something that is done more with MacIntyre (though probably still not enough) in relation to The New Left of The ULR and The NR and key essays such as NFTMW. There is much less written about his engagements within revolutionary Marxist organizations of the period. This is perhaps not surprising, given the general lack of interest in Macintyre's Marxism, let alone in—relatively speaking—obscure far-left, Trotskyist organizations in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet there are nevertheless some valuable resources here. And they are valuable because they help to provide a clearer picture of MacIntyre's motivations and beliefs during this period which, in turn, contextualize and inform his Marxism, his rejection of Marxism and, ultimately, his contemporary political position.

This chapter therefore examines MacIntyre's engagement within two revolutionary socialist organizations; firstly, the Socialist Labour League and, secondly, the International Socialists. I would suggest this is important to understanding MacIntyre's development in a number of ways. In particular, Maclntyre's writings within such organizations are significant in that they represent his most concrete attempt so far to spell out the meaning and content of revolutionary practice as understood within a Marxist framework. MacIntyre would begin to engage much more with the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky in various forms during this period. These provided for MacIntyre, at least for a short period, the possibility

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_4

of building on the Theses on Feuerbach-inspired view of revolutionary practice as the rationally determined, self-activity of the working class. At the very least, and particularly for those familiar with MacIntyre's contemporary politics, continuity here between the Marxist and the post-Marxist MacIntyre can be clearly identified.

Yet what also becomes apparent is the way that MacIntyre changes his understanding of Marxism's theoretical and practical resources in several significant ways. As we have seen, MacIntyre has always had a rather *critical* admiration for Marxism in that he has always been prepared to see the weaknesses as well as the strengths in Marx and those Marxists who developed his ideas. Central to MacIntyre's understanding of *how* to go about studying Marx has been, from the very beginning, the importance of not setting out with the explicit intention of purely attacking or defending Marx's work (MacIntyre 1953, p. 5). MacIntyre's participation within the two revolutionary organizations in question each represents a shift in the balance between what MacIntyre understands as both the potentialities and problems of Marxism. Firstly, within the SLL, we see MacIntyre moving closer to Marxism than he had previously been. This is MacIntyre at his most politically optimistic and where his relationship with Marxism is at its most positive. Secondly, as MacIntyre joined the International Socialists, certainly in the last few years of his membership of this organization, we see the balance shift again to a more pessimistic assessment of Marxism. Indeed, by the late 1960s, Marxism had been completely rejected as a political practice and this remains his contemporary view. This position informs his critique of Marxism in AV, therefore it is important to examine the genesis of this critique in order to put AV, and beyond, into context.

A variety of issues emerge from this period that together formed MacIntyre's understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of Marxism. These include the nature of political organization and leadership and the relationship of that leadership to the working class. In particular, MacIntyre's changing views on Lenin and the meaning and content of Leninism are important in forming his view about the nature and leadership of such organizations. MacIntyre's contemporary interpretation of Lenin remains central to his continued aversion to Marxist politics, as we will discuss in the fifth chapter. MacIntyre was beginning, within the SLL, to attempt to give a more practical grounding to his theory of a revolutionary Marxist ethics as he discussed in NFTMW. Here, MacIntyre would argue that the revolutionary party embodied, was

inseparable from, freedom (MacIntyre 1960a). The development of a 'third moral position' was essentially only possible, argued MacIntyre—at least for a short while, within such an organization. Macintyre continued to develop the view that Marxism, in a certain form, provided a non-deterministic, nonmechanistic understanding of human action and social change. For a short period, the Hegelian Marx continued to provide for MacIntyre an adequate model and understanding of human agency. MacIntyre's was therefore a defense of both the political and philosophical relevance and significance of Marxism. He would soon change his views on both of these aspects of Marxism. The arching framework here was the analysis of capitalism; both in terms of the accuracy of Marxists' understanding of the nature of modern capitalism and the political possibilities of the working class within it. MacIntyre, as we will eventually see more clearly in his later work, came to suggest that Marxists' fundamentally misunderstood both of these due to their philosophical failures which were rooted in Marx's own philosophical inadequacies (MacIntyre 1994). Overall, as others have suggested (Blackledge 2008), what MacIntyre was beginning to do, by the end of the 1960s, was to generalize what was originally a critique of Stalinist Marxism to a critique of most, if not all, forms of Marxism.

Signaling his growing commitment to revolutionary socialism, MacIntyre joined the SLL in 1959. This put MacIntyre in rather an unusual position in that he was now simultaneously deeply involved in a Trotskyist organization as well as the socialist-humanist inspired journals of The New Left. Much of the New Left regarded Leninism and Trotskyism with suspicion (Widgery 1977), while conversely, many Trotskyists had little time for the humanism of The New Left (Slaughter 1959, 1962; Baker 1962). MacIntyre, as others have argued (Knight 2007, p. 117), seemed to partially conceive his role as trying to build bridges, or at least points of commonality between the two, as we shall see later. The SLL was formed in 1959 from Gerry Healy's Fourth International-aligned Trotskyists known as The Group or The Club which began in 1947. Post-1956, the SLL was one of the Marxist groups which benefitted the most as a result of the defections from the CPGB. The SLL managed to draw in members who were both looking to explain the degenerations of Stalinism and simultaneously move forward politically (Hallas 1969). Nevertheless, in terms of absolute numbers, this was still a tiny organization with, at best, a few hundred members. (Callaghan 1984; Thayer 1965; Hallas 1969). Yet, more significantly,

was the caliber of intellectuals and political activists that the SLL managed to draw in and this was reflected in the writings of its journal *Labour Review* and its paper *The Newsletter*, to which MacIntyre made some significant contributions. Other recruits included Peter Fryer, Brian Behan, Chris Pallis (also known as Martin Grainger or Maurice Brinton) and Peter Cadogan. The SLL was informed by the revolutionary Trotskyist tradition, though its tactics under Healy were those of Entryism into the Labour Party. This became a sticking-point for MacIntyre (eventually a fatal one for his membership) and a minority of SLL members, led by Behan, who argued for an independent revolutionary working-class party (Callaghan 1984, p. 77).

MacIntyre, while in the SLL, understood the organization's position—and presumably his own—as representing an important move to the left after the break with the CPGB. He saw the influx from the CPGB to the SLL as an attempt to maintain a commitment to the revolutionary Marxist tradition, a revolutionary impulse that was being stultified within the Stalinist-influenced organizations. Writing in 1960, MacIntyre suggested that the move to the SLL and the inadequacies of the CPGB were representative of the distortion of Marxism at the hands of Stalinism, rather than of any inherent defects in Marxism itself (MacIntyre 1960c). MacIntyre was only in the SLL for about a year from June 1959 to June 1960 (Baker 1962, p. 65), yet in this short period he seemingly experienced both the individual authoritarianism of their notorious leader, Gerry Healy, as well as the wider, organizational drift into sectarianism and the rejection of open debate and discussion that had characterized the early SLL (Davidson 2011, p. 88). In what was undoubtedly attractive to some of the ex-CPBG members and other critics of Stalinism, The Club (and Healy) saw the events of 1956 as an opportunity to present the Trotskyist tradition as the only serious Marxist alternative to Stalinism. Even though, it has been noted, most that left the CPGB deserted radical politics for good, while still others who could not stomach Trotsky or Lenin gravitated toward the NR grouping, others moved into the orbit of Healy (Callaghan 1984, p. 71). Indeed, as a consequence of this increase in support Healy, along with Behan, founded the SLL in 1959 (Thayer 1965, p. 131).

At its formation, the SLL, at least for a short while, was a relatively open forum for discussion as seen in the pages of *The Newsletter* and *Labour Review*. Early issues of *Labour Review* highlighted the creative 'ice age' in Marxist literature as a result of Stalinism, stemming from 'the basic

lack of a theoretical grasp of the problems which confront modern capitalist society', stating that 'all those who honestly wish to develop Marxism will find room in *Labour Review*' (Daniels and Shaw 1957, pp. 1–2). There was a clear emphasis on the importance of theory in relation to informing and explaining practice, in a creative and open way, which was no doubt attractive to the Marxist MacIntyre who saw nothing of these aims and methods in the barrenness of Stalinism. Of the inaugural conference of the SLL in 1959, with an unmissable optimism, Peter Fryer wrote that its unity came from the merging of three streams of socialism: the old Trotskyist movements, the dissident Communists and the Left-wing of the Labour Party (Fryer 1959a, p. 40). MacIntyre, seemingly sharing this optimism and, signaling his growing commitment to the Marxist party at a meeting of some 700 delegates later that same year, reiterated the important role for Marxist theory in providing a guide for action and of the role of the party in constructing the unity between worker and intellectual (MacIntyre 1959b, p. 331). Even those more critical of the organization have tended to recognize that the SLL got off to a promising start, in a relatively open environment, with the impressive array of intellectuals and workers that the SLL managed to recruit (Shaw 1978, p. 104).

Yet this open, creative approach to Marxism (and Marxists) only flourished briefly within the SLL and, it seems, in spite of, rather than because of its leading figure, Gerry Healy. It is difficult to find anything positive to be said about both Healy as an individual and Healy the party leader (beyond a certain political effectiveness) except, perhaps, from Ken Livingstone or the various Redgraves. Perhaps the most damning of these criticisms come from his ex-comrades, who experienced his methods first-hand. Brian Behan recalls, in a passage that is both shocking and hilarious (Behan 1991, pp. 179–180), being physically assaulted by both fist and shoe at the hands (and feet) of Healy's 'henchmen'. The cause of this assault was that Behan had dared, firstly, to propose that workers' democracy and nationalization should be applied to the SLL itself and, secondly, to stand up to Healy's resulting verbal assaults. The result, not surprisingly, was Behan's expulsion. Fryer resigned in protest at what he called Healy's constant attempts to discredit critical comrades, his lies about other members, endless insults and methods that had 'nothing in common' with Marxism (Fryer 1959b). Ken Coates claimed that every dispute with Healy had a 'tendency to go nuclear' (Coates 2006). These were not isolated cases of dissent. MacIntyre's own views on Healy seemed to echo these portraits. The dispute that saw MacIntyre

leave the SLL (accounts vary as to whether he resigned or was expelled) was, interestingly, his support for Behan's call for independence from the Labour Party in 1959. However, MacIntyre made it clear that this was not only an issue with Healy himself; rather, it was also the undemocratic nature of the organization, so MacIntyre stressed the need to avoid the 'demonology' of placing the blame solely on Healy (Callaghan 1984, p. 78). Perhaps significantly, MacIntyre's experience of Trotskyism was seemingly not simply that of an organization corrupted by an individual, but also of the potentially problematic nature of any such relatively small organization that would be open to such corruption due to its constricted nature. However, if the experience of leaving the SLL had any long-term consequences for MacIntyre's views on the nature of such organizations, these did not show at this stage. For after leaving the SLL, MacIntyre joined another, smaller far-left Trotskyist grouping, the International Socialists.

Within the SLL, MacIntyre made several significant contributions. The first of these, *The New Left*, was in response to what MacIntyre clearly saw as the problematic, sectarian style of some within the organization, specifically one of their leading theoreticians, Cliff Slaughter. If Slaughter had caricatured The New Left in an overly-sectarian style (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a, p. xxix), this was in response to a similar tendency within journals such as the ULR who critiqued, and often caricatured, the 'mindless militancy' (Birnbaum quoted in Slaughter 1959, p. 49) of the SLL's paper, *The Newsletter*. It seems that both organizations developed, to some extent, caricatures of the other which perhaps limited the effectiveness of what were, at root, important points for discussion. Slaughter, for example, said of the New Left in 1962:

> these people replace Marxist theory with a thin ideological porridge in which are mixed lumps of psycho-analysis, logical positivism, and something called 'humanism'. (Slaughter 1962, p. 18)

Beyond the unfortunate sectarianism, Slaughter nevertheless made some cogent points in earlier discussions of the New Left. The essence of Slaughter's critique was that The New Left tended to ignore or play down the significance of industrial struggles (those struggles characterized by MacIntyre as struggles at 'the point of production'). Slaughter reminded The New Left, echoing an earlier argument by Behan, that there could be no victory for socialism if the working classes had been defeated or decisively damaged industrially.

Despite Slaughter's often harsh, sectarian tone, his understanding of Marxism—at least in *The 'New Left' and the Working Class*—was generally rather subtle and nuanced, defending the centrality of the Hegelian dialectic to Marxism in much the same way that MacIntyre would. Slaughter, like MacIntyre, agreed that it was 'true' that the base–superstructure had been interpreted mechanically but this did not amount to accepting The New Left's conclusion of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Slaughter was quick to recognize the importance of a changing capitalist system, of the emergence of new classes, and that 'detailed and intensive research' could not be substituted for inadequate theory and analysis (Slaughter 1959, p. 50). Slaughter's point, and how he differentiated himself from the ULR New Left, was that such changes were changes *within* the capitalist system and that it was important to begin with the framework of 'the specific historical character of capitalist development' from which flows the fundamentally contradictory nature of the class struggle (Slaughter 1959, p. 50). His critique of The New Left was that they had drifted so far away from Marx that they had almost completely rejected any framework such as this from which to understand the nature of the system. Slaughter's concern was that a focus on 'socialism in the here and now' in The New Left effectively amounted to a rejection of the class struggle as the prime focus of Marxists.

The interesting point here is that MacIntyre essentially agreed with almost all the substance of Slaughter's critique (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 87). What drew him to the SLL was his belief in the necessity of a revolutionary party through which the class struggle could best be fought. Undoubtedly this set him apart sharply from many of his New Left colleagues, and Slaughter's concerns with the New Left's rejection of Marxism both as theoretical resource and working-class weapon were clearly the same concerns as MacIntyre's. Yet, importantly, and unlike Slaughter, MacIntyre was prepared to see the wider significance of a New Left movement that, in its own way, was important in opening up people to the possibilities of socialism. Immediately, it is clear that MacIntyre held a conception of leadership that was opposed to the sectarian style of leaders and leading members (such as Slaughter). Unfortunately, it would soon become apparent that MacIntyre's democratic approach to politics and debate was increasingly incongruent with the SLL leadership, particularly Gerry Healy. (Blackledge and Davidson 2008b, p. xxix). However, while part of this organization, MacIntyre's first contribution to *Labour Review* was written with a view to opening up a dialogue between the two parties.

MacIntyre argued that the 'most important fact about The New Left is it exists' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 87). Significantly, suggests MacIntyre, a large number of people had come into the orbit of socialism as a result of the meeting of two distinct groups. The old-Communists, post-1956, had given an eloquent voice and expression to the dissatisfaction of a whole generation of young people who had yet to be 'moulded into political shape' by the 'orthodoxies' of society (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 88). MacIntyre, though full of praise for those gravitating toward the New Left, is concerned with understanding how such a milieu can move beyond the confines of cultural and sectional struggles into a working-class movement that opposes not this-or-that aspect of the system, but the system itself. MacIntyre suggests that the way out of this is to focus on the 'basic antagonism' in our society 'at the point of production' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 89). Significantly, this argument displays a close affinity with a group of Marxists around the French Journal *Socialism or Barbarism* (Blackledge 2006; Blackledge and Davidson 2008a). Key contributors to this journal included Cornelius Castoriadis (writing under the pseudonym of Paul Cardan) and Chris Pallis (also known as Maurice Brinton or Martin Grainger). Pallis would go on to split from the SLL and found the Socialist Reaffirmed group (also known as Solidarity) which was closely connected with its French counterpart.

The appeal for MacIntyre of Socialism or Barbarism was their emphasis on spontaneity and struggle at the point of production as well as their conception of revolutionary leadership. In one of the key texts associated with the Socialism or Barbarism grouping (*Modern Capitalism and Revolution*—originally published between 1960 and 1961), Cornelius Castoriadis argued that:

> At the point of production, class action and the positive socialization of the workers are constantly being sustained by the very structure of capitalism. (Castoriadis 1988b, p. 293)

Castoriadis drew a link between the modernization of capitalism and the de-politicization of the working class, in arguments that would later be echoed by MacIntyre (Cardan 1965, p. 7). Castoriadis suggested at least three consequences of what he claimed was a profoundly modified modern capitalism. These were: a growing political apathy, a transformation of the trade unions into a peace-keeper role and a working class that had 'succeeded in avoiding the aggravation of this [division of labour] to its disadvantage' (Cardan 1965, pp. 13, 15, 25). Brinton, too, thought the

trade union movement had 'degenerated' into expressing 'non-proletarian social interests' (Brinton 2004b, p. 18) but it was nevertheless at the point of industrial dispute and struggle that the structure of capitalist relations could be undermined (Brinton 2004c, p. 46).

Even though—and importantly so—Castoriadis maintained that there was still an 'insoluble internal contradiction' (Cardan 1965, p. 36) inherent within the capitalist process, much of his analysis gives the immediate impression that the development of a socialist consciousness and therefore the revolutionary potential of the proletariat had considerably diminished within a much-changed capitalist society. Indeed, Castoriadis's political pessimism gradually grew to the extent that he eventually came to believe that 'there were no longer any contradictions in capitalism at all' (Van Der Linden 1997, p. 27). Castoriadis's answer to the difficulties facing the worker and the intellectual was, like Brinton's, to maintain that the working-class struggle 'takes on its clearest form in the fields of production, of economy and politics' and that 'the daily struggle against exploitation which accompanies work provides the worker with a framework for positive socialization' (Cardan 1965, p. 43). Castoriadis argues that the political apathy of the working class meant that political activity—and consequently the value of such activity—had diminished greatly under modern capitalism. His focus for resistance to capitalism was at the point of production as this was an area of 'increasing interdependency' between workers, meaning that this close association of workers could become the focal point for 'a positive way out of this contradiction' of modern capitalism (Cardan 1965, p. 78).

This was the first of two clear points of contact between MacIntyre and Socialism or Barbarism (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a). The second concerns the conception of revolutionary leadership, discussed shortly, that Macintyre, Castoriadis and Brinton all develop. As MacIntyre develops his thought during his time in IS., we will see how he became increasingly influenced by this grouping. It therefore becomes important to discuss the consequences of this in terms of the role it plays in MacIntyre's eventual rejection of Marxism. MacIntyre's position, in 1961's *Rejoinder to Reformism* has striking parallels with that of Castoriadis. He argues that, under modern capitalism, 'the mass membership [of a working-class organization] becomes sectionalized, acquires the aspirations of bourgeois society, [and] disintegrates as a movement' (MacIntyre 1961, p. 191). However, MacIntyre argues, capitalism cannot prevent the worker from recognizing his alienation within capitalism and that it was through combining with other workers, specifically

at work, that they could potentially set themselves free. In *The New Left*, MacIntyre argues that it is only in and through those struggles at the point of production that people might come to understand the real nature of the capitalist system, therefore bridging the gap between individual struggles and struggles against the system itself. One of the key failings of the New Left, argues MacIntyre, is that it fails to place working-class life *at work*, conceptualizing man in leisure rather than at the point which most effectively forms his social activities (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 90).

Edward Thompson's reply to MacIntyre is a significant one in that, he argues, it frames a potential weakness in both MacIntyre's and Castoriadis's argument (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a). Thompson pointed out:

> Because the way in which MacIntyre phrases his reproof entails the suggestion that, since the "basic antagonism" in our society is to be found in the nature of capitalist exploitation at work, therefore this is the only real or important antagonism, and that all other intellectual or political engagements are only of importance if they lead to this. (Thompson 1960c, p. 68)

Thompson argued that MacIntyre's position was too simplistic in that it failed to realize that all socialist engagements, not just purely at the point of production but on a far more widespread cultural, political and intellectual level did not dissipate but in fact *generated* positive socialist energy. Thompson suggests that it may be MacIntyre's conception of the base and superstructure relationship that could be a major factor in contributing to this perspective. He states:

> 'We do not have one "basic antagonism" at the place of work, and a series of remoter, more muffled antagonisms in the social or ideological "superstructure", which are in some way less "real"'.
>
> Continuing, Thompson argues that it is wrong to characterize capitalism as simply an act of theft at the point of production; rather it should be understood as being 'built-in to our institutions, legal code, customs and possessive morality'. (Thompson 1960c, p. 68)

Nevertheless, despite these differences with the New Left, the most pressing task for Marxists is not sectarian criticism, suggests MacIntyre, it is a renewed dialogue between Marxists and the New Left in order that each can learn from the other. For if Marxists provide the often-missing understanding of working-class activity, the New Left's work on

the nature and distribution of power is able to provide an understanding and explanation of the nature and sources of alienation in contemporary society. The potential coherence of the coming together of these two sources of resistance means that, for MacIntyre, there is 'no inconsistency' in being within the New Left and the SLL. Yet, for MacIntyre, the fundamental failing of the New Left, no doubt scarred by their experiences with Communism, was their aversion to *organised*, political and industrial struggle. MacIntyre sees the great danger here is that the loose milieu of the New Left, as a result, would be unable to 'impinge' in any meaningful way on the class struggle (MacIntyre 1959a, pp. 91–92).

It was in this context that MacIntyre wrote two of his more significant essays during this period. Within a New Left publication (edited by Thompson) he penned *Breaking the Chains of Reason*; while in the SLL's *Labour Review* he published *Freedom and Revolution*, both in 1960. Both of these essays contain continuities and change within MacIntyre's Marxism and both, to some extent, reflect MacIntyre's increasing political activism and embrace of certain aspects of Marxist thought and practice. BTCOR is much longer and is, as others have argued, one of the great Marxist essays of that period (Davidson 2013). It is also the more complex and philosophical, perhaps a reflection of the New Left publication it appeared in. Somewhat contrasting this, FaR could only really have been written from within a revolutionary organization, such as the SLL, committed to a defense of the Leninist principle of the vanguard party. Both develop, as well as add to, the key themes that concerned MacIntyre in the third of his already-discussed, great essays in this period, NFTMW.

We previously saw how, in 1958, MacIntyre was beginning to re-evaluate Lenin from what was essentially a wholly critical view in 1953 to a much more positive—though never uncritical—view five years later. In *The Algebra of Revolution*, Macintyre was prepared to see Lenin's Hegelian conversion as a step to narrowing the gap between Lenin's conception of revolutionary leadership and Marx's conception of revolutionary practice (MacIntyre 1958). In FaR, Leninism plays a much more prominent role still. This is because it is only now through a party conceived in Leninist terms, argues MacIntyre, that freedom—the freedom that is, of a socialist society—can be achieved. Freedom and revolution are not contradictory terms they are interdependent, as they are inextricably bound up with the question of revolution. MacIntyre argues that there are very specific ways that we are 'unfree' in capitalist society and,

because of this, the working class are unable to move toward socialism 'spontaneously' (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 131). MacIntyre argues that freedom can only be found through an organization that moves the working class to achieve their own freedom, not one that attempts to do it for them (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 132).

MacIntyre is clearly arguing, at this stage, that the democratic centralism that he endorses—conceived not in terms of manipulation or elitism but in terms of fostering self-activity within the working class—is not incompatible with the Marxian conception of revolutionary practice. This is because he views the Hegelian Lenin as emphasizing the self-activity of the working class as central, in a clear shift from how he sees Lenin's own pre-Hegelian conception of the role of the party as being one of a manipulator of a passive population. MacIntyre's commitment to Leninism here was therefore not the Leninism of other leading figures of the SLL. So while MacIntyre did argue that party discipline and organization were necessary to prevent the individual from becoming a reflection of the standpoint of civil society, he did not view the party's role as being external to the working class, bringing socialist theory to the party from outside (Blackledge 2014, p. 713). Yet, as made clear in the contemporary *Communism and British Intellectuals*, MacIntyre did not mean by this that there was no differentiation of role between intellectual and worker. While the former must learn and integrate with the latter, the intellectuals nevertheless made a specific contribution, based on their knowledge and understanding of theory, or else they might as well not be there at all (MacIntyre 1960c, p. 120).

The difference between Slaughter and MacIntyre was made explicit in Slaughter's reply where he implicitly criticized MacIntyre's conception of political leadership. Slaughter argued that the capitalist structure itself must first be 'grasped in consciousness' by the working class and this was necessary for any revolutionary party. However, Slaughter asserted, there was a gap between a genuine understanding of capitalism and the immediate experiences and consciousness of the working class (Slaughter 1960, p. 19). The working class, consequently, were unable to bridge this gap by themselves, therefore it was the role of the intellectual to introduce theory from the outside into the working-class movement in order to do so. From Slaughter's perspective, MacIntyre's conception of political leadership was unable to address the problem of the development of consciousness within the working class as it lacked the more active, essentially elitist, role that Slaughter proscribed to his version

of Leninism. Despite MacIntyre criticizing the New Left for being 'pipe-dreamers' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 100), in that they conceived of socialist intellectuals cut off from the working class, his own claims that the two groups would 'become one' was problematic from Slaughter's more elitist view of the relationship. On this interpretation, in guarding against a Communist party that had 'perverted the role of the intellectuals' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 99), MacIntyre had swung too far in trying to narrow the gap between worker and intellectual and ended up expounding an ineffectual understanding of political leadership.

MacIntyre's continued admiration for Marx's ToF, with its critique of the materialist tendency to divide society into two parts, fitted in well with Castoriadis specifically, and Socialism or Barbarism more generally, which tended to assert that:

> The revolutionary movement must therefore cease to be an organization of specialists. It must become the place … where an increasing number of individuals learn about collective life, run their own affairs, and fulfil and develop themselves, working for a common objective in reciprocal recognition. (Cardan 1965, p. 94)

MacIntyre seemed to take from Castoriadis the view that the role of the revolutionary was to give theoretical focus to the *spontaneous* movement of the working class at the point of production. This suggests at least some affinity with Luxemburg, who conceived the role of the party as being in terms of the 'prolongation' of spontaneity (Feenberg 1988, p. 135). Castoriadis's concern was that:

> any organization could degenerate into a bureaucratic monster, but that such degeneration could definitely be prevented if a conscious permanent struggle is waged against it. (Van Der Linden 1997, p. 24)

Yet, at this stage, and unlike Castoriadis, MacIntyre did not see this view as being *fundamentally* incompatible with some interpretations of Leninism. So while there were sharp differences with others in the SLL concerning political leadership, the role and importance of the party here clearly represent in MacIntyre a much more definite commitment to revolutionary, Leninist politics—albeit specifically conceived—than seen in previous MacIntyre essays. Those familiar with AV, and other later works, will also have noted that MacIntyre would revert back to his earlier, highly critical

conception of the relationship between worker and party, discussed later, and that this forms a key reason for his continued rejection of Marxist politics. Whatever one's view of MacIntyre's interpretation of Lenin, there can be little doubt that his views shifted on numerous occasions, leaving Lenin (alongside Trotsky) as perhaps one of the most ambiguous figures in MacIntyre's thought (Davidson 2013, pp. 158–159).

Yet, for now, the influence of Hegel on Lenin provides a different conception of revolutionary leadership from that portrayed in AV and beyond. As with NTFMW, and all of his earlier Marxist works, Hegel plays a central role in FaR. It is from Hegel that MacIntyre is able to make the claim that freedom is bound up with revolution. This is because MacIntyre takes from Hegel the view that a historicized conception of freedom is the essence of man (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 124). If freedom is the goal of mankind then, concretely, it is the discovery of the kind of life where man can best develop those concepts of practical consciousness—desire, intention, choice—that is the realization of that freedom. This, following Hegel, is a historical discovery and, following Marx, is necessarily bound up with the struggle for a classless society. The nature of contemporary class society therefore entails that such a discovery can only be made within an organization through which freedom can be historically realized. As MacIntyre states, the problem of freedom must be resolved historically and is dependent on specific social forms (MacIntyre 1960a, p. 129). Those who are most free are those who are most able to make their lives their own. Freedom is an achievement that only the vehicle of the organized, Marxist party can deliver.

FaR represented MacIntyre's most clear commitment to revolutionary politics yet; It took the form of endorsing Leninist ideas of vanguard organization through a commitment to a nonmanipulative, nonelitist conception of the relationship between worker and party. The collection that published BTCOR, Thompson's *Out of Apathy*, was reflective of MacIntyre's commitment to both the New Left grouped around The NR/ULR and the Trotskyist SLL—despite him being on the cusp of leaving this organization as it was published. None of the other contributors, while important figures in their own right, shared this dual commitment. Thompson himself, in his introductory essay, picked out MacIntyre's contribution as being different due to his 'Trotskyite' affiliations (Thompson 1960a). It is perhaps not insignificant that *Out of Apathy* emerged with the formation of *New Left Review* due to the merger between The NR and *Universities and Left Review*, as

Thompson himself indicates in his essay. This new journal was one that MacIntyre would only contribute to once, and only briefly, perhaps signaling his final break with the more intellectual, less political, generally anti-Trotskyist and anti-Leninist New Left.

BTCOR is one of the great defenses of the Hegelian Marxist method against both Stalinist Marxism and liberal individualism. MacIntyre develops a powerful argument that Hegel and Marx provide the foundations from which it is possible to challenge and provide an alternative to the apathetic, individualistic and manipulative theory and practice of modern social life. Present here are some of the themes and characters that would be developed most famously in AV though, significantly, the antidote here comes in a Hegelian-Marxist rather than Aristotelian form. MacIntyre argues that the expulsion of the Hegelian method from the social sciences resulted in a fundamentally inadequate model for explaining human action becoming dominant. The importance of Hegel—as we have seen before—is that, for MacIntyre, he provides a specifically historical and social understanding of human action, grounded in his view that freedom is the essence of human nature. Hegel views history as a series of 'developing purposes' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 139) that can only be understood through those specifically human concepts of desire, intention and choice; to know what someone is doing is to know what ends they are pursuing. History unfolds dialectically, like a conversation or an argument and through conflicts of 'principle and purpose', therefore to understand human action one has to understand the content of those specifically human concepts. Following Hegel, MacIntyre argues that freedom is historical, its concrete content and meaning changes over time, it is not something that men either do or do not possess, it is 'always an achievement and a task' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 140). Freedom and reason are linked as our ability to question the content and constructs of the latter are dependent on the level of agency and choice that have been historically and socially achieved with the former.

MacIntyre's argument is that the failures of theory, embodied in social sciences and practice, stem at least partially from a rejection of the Hegelian method. This is a rejection that is common to both anti-metaphysical positivism and to Stalinism. For Stalinism, the expulsion of Hegel necessitated an understanding of human action that removed those concepts of agency and, as we saw earlier, resulted in a mechanical interpretation of history and change represented by their particular version of the base–superstructure model. In the social sciences, the lost

connection between freedom, reason and human activity ensured the dominance of the positivist view that 'human activity can be reduced to patterns of response to the stimuli of conditioning' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 140). This meant that the task of the social scientist—familiar to readers of AV—was now to look for causal explanations and law-like generalizations. The correlative of Hegel's expulsion was the dominant assumption that there was nothing distinctive about human behavior that might differentiate the social from the natural sciences and to understand human behavior was to simultaneously be able to control it (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 146). This 'machine model' of human action is contrasted with MacIntyre's evermore familiar reference to Marx's understanding of human action as developed in the ToF. MacIntyre states:

> … the machine model will do to explain how we come to be modelled and acted upon, but not how we act. And we can only apply the mechanistic type of explanation to this by making an arbitrary distinction between them and ourselves. (MacIntyre 1960b, pp. 146–147)

The second part of this essay is a brilliant defense of Hegelian Marxism against the charges of totalitarianism brought by Karl Popper. MacIntyre constructs this defense through his critique of a series of what he sees as the 'false dichotomies' assumed by Popper. The first of these dichotomies, argues MacIntyre, hinges on Popper's mistaken interpretation of Marx's theory of history. Popper's thought, representative of the dominant assumptions of the age, assumes that our choice is between a rejection of any theory of history and a 'historicist' belief in absolute historical trends. It is the choice between these two absolutes that MacIntyre is concerned with questioning. The second of these positions is characterized by Popper, argues MacIntyre, as representative of Marxism's drive toward uncovering objective laws of historical change as seen in the Stalinist method. Yet, just as Stalinism is a caricature of Marxism, Popper's is a caricature of Marx. MacIntyre argues that Marx *did* believe in discovering historical trends, yet these were not 'absolute trends' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 150). Popper, in effect, has set up a straw man in Marx's thought. Marx's 'economic laws' were not 'laws' in the Popperian sense, they were not statements of absolute trends, rather, they were contingent trends dependent on and shaped by human agency. What Marx understood, in explaining history, was the importance of those Hegelian-inspired concepts of 'practical consciousness' to the historical process.

Marx, argues MacIntyre, rather than providing a series of historical absolutes, provides a framework for understanding history. Therefore, contrary to Popperian caricature, Marx's claim that 'all history is the history is the history of class struggle' is not a law-like generalization but recognition of limiting and conditioning factors and tendencies, rather than exhaustive explanations (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 150).

Popper's second false dichotomy reflects both his and broader society's 'methodological individualism'. Popper's concern here is again with Marxism's tendency to substitute real, concrete individuals for 'super-empirical, abstract concepts such as 'society'—the vice of 'holism' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 152). Yet MacIntyre argues that this misunderstands both the nature of individuals and of society, in positing what is a false 'either or' choice. Popper's weakness here is his one-dimensional understanding of the individual. MacIntyre argues that Popper is right to state that there is no history and society which is not also the history of concrete individuals. Yet the typically individualist standpoint misses the crucial corollary of this, which is that no individuals exist apart from either history or society. Popper, and liberal society more widely, are representative of the 'Robinsonades' that Marx ridiculed in *The Grundrisse* for abstracting man from the social relations which he was inextricably part of (Marx 1978, p. 222).

Popper's third false dichotomy, as developed by MacIntyre, concerns his understanding of the social sciences and the approach to knowledge that we should, or should not, adopt. MacIntyre attacks Popper's characterization of the choice between a partisan and a neutral approach within the social sciences. Popper's mistake here is also the mistake of academia more widely; it is to presume that Marxism solely represents the partisan method in that it is fundamentally concerned with 'changing' rather than merely analyzing society. The corollary of this view is the assumption that the nonpartisan method—from Popper's perspective, the 'legitimate' approach—is one concerned only with matching means to ends, that is, to expunge Marxism's attempt to change society from social analysis (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 152). Popper's failure here is not only his association of totalitarianism with Marxism (and therefore his hostility to the Marxist method) it is his assertion that the legitimate alternative is in any sense neutral. What Popper specifically, and the academy generally, smuggle in to this approach is a very specific, non-Marxist conception of human activity that is reformist, no longer concerned with questioning or changing ends. It essentially leaves the existing framework untouched

and unquestioned, meaning, for example, that questions of economic strategy are no longer questions about the system itself. They are, rather, questions formed and answered through a framework *within* capitalism and no longer *of* capitalism.

MacIntyre argues that these mistakes, based on the expulsion of a Hegelian Marxist understanding of human nature, freedom and reason, are mistakes embodied in both social theory and social life. C. Wright Mills and Talcott Parsons, despite their contrasting politics, are exemplars of the two resulting inadequate positions within the social sciences. Parson represents the mechanistic view; he evacuates history and politics from his analysis and abstracts the individual from their social relations. His analysis is one-dimensional and unable to explain social change. Yet Wright Mills' mistake reflects the other inadequate position. The individual here is a victim of autonomous social processes, swallowed up by society. In each, the common factor is that the individual becomes not agent but victim. MacIntyre states: 'If Parsons showed us a social equilibrium in which individuals are wholly absorbed, Wright Mills shows us a machine in which individuals are trapped' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 155), both are 'submerged by the determinist image of man' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 156). Each ends up repeating the mistakes of the dilemma that the social sciences finds itself in. Seemingly, *either* men can discover the workings of society and realize they too are part of that machine, therefore they too are victims; *or* they cannot discover them, in which case, again, they are victims of material forces outside their control and understanding. The result is the same, in that both positions frame an irrational world, with men playing the part of either rational subject or object, neither of which can do anything about it. The crucial feature of this dilemma, argues MacIntyre, is that it separates understanding and action (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 156). This, of course, runs contrary to the understanding of revolutionary practice outlined by Marx in the ToF.

The inevitable consequence of imprisonment within this dilemma is that it breeds apathy and conformism as social change appears impossible regardless of the response adopted. MacIntyre's answer to such a dilemma is grounded in the Hegelian Marxist view of freedom as the essence of man. This is a specific conception of freedom in that, for MacIntyre, freedom must be both means and ends. This necessarily entails that people must find their own means, following their own desires; genuine, human freedom can only come through liberation, not manipulation, which precludes that ultimate representation of means

ends reasoning, utilitarianism (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 164). It is not difficult to work out that, for MacIntyre, the political corollary of this is a form of revolutionary organization that conceptualizes the relationship between worker and intellectual in much the same way as the Hegelian-inspired Leninism that he discusses in FaR. Similarly, again reflecting the influence of Castoriadis and Socialism or Barbarism, MacIntyre argues that such 'human activity' can be found at the point of production:

> It is there wherever those whose lives are most made and imposed upon them, the working people in the industrial and in the colonial centres, revolt against the conditions of their life. (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 159)

MacIntyre ends BTCOR with a reference to Marx's eleventh Thesis: 'The philosophers have continued to interpret the world differently; the point remains, to change it' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 166). It is here, as MacIntyre is still involved in the New Left and on the verge of leaving the SLL for IS, that MacIntyre's Marxism reaches both its most optimistic and most theoretically significant point. All of MacIntyre's great, specifically Marxist essays had now been written. By this I mean the essays in which MacIntyre still largely understood Marxism as being both ethically and politically adequate. There were significant contributions to Marxist theory to come, yet they were significant more because they signaled his increasing belief, in one way or another, in Marxism's deficiencies; fascinating, because they increasingly reflected the contradictions and conflicts within MacIntyre's own thought.

This trio of essays are broadly significant in two ways; firstly, in terms of what they contribute to debates within Marxism; secondly, their pivotal role—particularly NFTMW—in understanding MacIntyre's post-Marxist project and the themes this project incorporates. The second of these claims is certainly the least contentious as NFTMW is increasingly recognized, even from those with generally little interest in Marxism, as establishing MacIntyre's post-Marxist project. The first claim, that it is an important contribution to Marxism specifically, is one that many on the left would refute. The most obvious reason for this is that MacIntyre's early Marxist works are often seen through the lens of AV. The rather brusque treatment of Marxism here, combined with its seeming political pessimism, ensure an often hostile position to MacIntyre from those on the left. Indeed, it would be hard for those on the revolutionary Left to endorse MacIntyre's politics in which—or so it

was perceived—political activism was not a virtue (Sedgwick 1982). This was amplified by the fact that AV was written by someone who was once deeply involved in the revolutionary socialist movement in Britain before discarding it completely.

It seems that the crucial factor that resulted in MacIntyre's expulsion or resignation from the SLL was his support for Behan's minority faction that argued for a split from the Labour party. In a letter to Healy, MacIntyre wrote:

> other comrades now allege … a whole range of attempts to detach comrades from the minority faction … it has now been established that minorities cannot exist in your organization. I say your organization advisedly because of your private ownership of the assets and personal dominance. (MacIntyre quoted in Callaghan 1984, p. 78)

As we saw, MacIntyre refused to lay the blame purely at Healy's door, stressing that the size and structure of the organization was at least partially responsible for the untenable situation within the SLL. Yet, at least for now, this did not put MacIntyre off organized, revolutionary politics. It is in some ways a little surprising that MacIntyre chose International Socialism over Solidarity (the Socialism or Barbarism influenced SLL breakaway group formed by Chris Pallis) given his affiliation with their views on both political leadership and revolutionary struggle (Davidson 2013). Yet, clearly, MacIntyre still at this stage saw the heterodox Trotskyist tradition as being the most politically viable alternative. However, as the 1960s went on, even while still in IS, this would begin to change. In terms of size, International Socialism was still tiny, with just a few hundred members. Later, as the Socialist Workers Party, its membership would grow well into the thousands, yet MacIntyre had long since left by that time. Despite its small size, like the SLL, it had some significant intellectual weight. Alongside MacIntyre was its founder, chief architect of the state capitalism thesis, Tony Cliff, and its main economic theoretician and coeditor, Michael Kidron, from whom MacIntyre has recently stated he learned a lot (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183). The IS grouping differed significantly from the SLL—or what the SLL had become—under Gerry Healy. In the period when MacIntyre was involved, it is generally regarded to have been much more open, creative and intellectually appealing than other far-left groupings which tended toward sectarianism (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a, p. xxxiii; Thompson 1960b).

This can be detected in Kidron's tone, when he states that IS is 'not Trotskyist but Trotskyist-derived' and that it 'only incidentally incorporates the thoughts and theses of Trotsky' (Thayer 1965, p. 142). IS, continues Kidron, is open to the socialism of Marx, Lenin or 'anyone else' and the key concern is with socialism itself rather than any specific figures or theories. This suggests a commitment to the spirit of Trotskyism rather than a more inflexible adherence to his theories. Indeed, IS's key interpretations and understanding of Trotskyism, in the form of Cliff's State Capitalism thesis seems to confirm this.

IS's concerns were essentially two-fold; to explain the economic stabilization of the capitalist states and to continue the tradition of classical Marxism in the wake of its ossification at the hands of the Stalinists (Callinicos 1990; Thayer 1965, p. 42). The second of these concerns was bolstered by Cliff's state capitalism thesis which represented a complete break with the 'orthodox' Trotskyist view that the Soviet Union was in any way socialist. As a response to Trotsky's erroneous predictions on the nature and outcome of the Second World War, IS represented one of three responses from the broader Trotskyist movement. The first of these responses, represented in those orthodox movements of the fourth international, was a continued adherence to the word of Trotsky; the second was the revisionism of Castoriadis and Socialism or Barbarism which broke more clearly with the classical Marxist tradition; the third was the IS position who critiqued the orthodox tradition and which aimed to develop and return to the ideas of classical Marxism (Callinicos 1990).

MacIntyre quickly switched from his acceptance of the 'degenerated workers state' orthodoxy seen in *Marcuse and the Monolith* to the 'state capitalist' thesis outlined by Cliff. Trotsky, despite his general willingness to reformulate his views had maintained, to the end, the view that the Soviet Union was in some way socialist. Trotsky, of course, was one of the great critics of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, yet he argued that the bureaucracy could not be a class in itself (like the capitalist class) without the existence of private property. He concluded that the bureaucracy was a temporary stage on the road to socialism, conceptualized as a degenerated workers' state, and that it would not, and could not, last for long (Harman 2009). This was a view that had clearly been refuted by history itself. Cliff, in rejecting Trotsky's view on this issue, argued that the essence of capitalism was not private property but capital accumulation, allowing him to argue that the fact that industry was nationalized in the Soviet Union was not the key issue.

Cliff's painstaking empirical analysis set out to show that, under the state bureaucracy, workers' control of the state and the means of production had been reduced and eventually destroyed. Chris Harman, who later extended Cliff's analysis, sums up his key points of refutation against Trotsky:

> [In the Soviet Union by the winter of 1928-29] 'The last elements of workers' control were destroyed in the factories; trade union independence was completely abolished; real wages fell 30 or 40 percent; the GPU was given a free hand to obliterate the last remnants of discussion inside the party; the fight against 'egalitarianism' became state policy as differentials between bureaucrats and workers increased massively; the peasants were driven from the land through so-called 'collectivisation'; the number of prisoners in labor camps rose 20 fold in two years (rising tenfold again in the next decade); Russification was used to destroy the autonomy of the non-Russian Soviet republics'. (Harman 1990)

On this interpretation, with no semblance of workers control and power distilled into a bureaucratic, parasitic class functioning as the capitalist class, any equation of socialism with the Soviet Union was patently false. MacIntyre explicitly rejected the orthodox Trotskyist position and came to accept Cliff's state capitalism thesis. He suggested that any successful defense of the view that the Soviet Union was in any sense a workers state had to be justified on the grounds of nationalization of property or on the achievements of the bureaucracy. Yet, MacIntyre stated, nationalized property did not equate to socialism as the workers did not own the state, while the achievements of the bureaucracy were typically capitalist achievements. Soviet Marxism, continues MacIntyre, has all the hallmarks of a class ideology, and all these features together point toward a capitalist, not socialist, structure of the Soviet Union (MacIntyre 1961, p. 193). Trotsky, as MacIntyre notes, held at least four positions on the nature of the Russian State. Although each successive position was more critical of the bureaucracy than the last, Trotsky continued to insist, argues MacIntyre, the bureaucracy was a caste, rather than a class, because he wrongly supposed that private capitalism or socialism were the only two political alternatives available (MacIntyre 1963b, p. 270).

Even though MacIntyre's conception of the party and revolutionary activity might have been closer to Socialism or Barbarism, the broad appeal of IS for MacIntyre must have come from its willingness to re-evaluate and question orthodoxies and to try and separate Marxism

from Stalinism. This fits well with MacIntyre's own political and intellectual trajectory, in the sense that he has always been willing to question himself and his theories throughout his life, as well as aiming to remain true to the revolutionary kernel of Marx's conception of revolutionary practice. Despite Trotsky's failure to recognize the inadequacies of his degenerated workers' state thesis (a position mirrored by the orthodox Trotskyists), and despite MacIntyre's own, often highly critical comments about Trotskyists, MacIntyre nevertheless retains an admiration for Trotsky himself long after he had rejected Marxism (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 199, 256). Of Trotskyists, one of MacIntyre's key criticisms was that, in staying 'true' to the letter of Trotsky's own, falsified later theories, they are rejecting the spirit of Trotsky himself and are holding a position that Trotsky would have certainly rejected (MacIntyre 1963b, p. 273). For MacIntyre, Trotsky's willingness to reformulate his own theories is a trait not shared by the majority of his followers. In theoretical terms, particularly impressive to MacIntyre, was Trotsky's portrait of the 'deadening, tyrannical oppression' of Stalinism *in The Revolution Betrayed* (MacIntyre 1963b, p. 270). Practically, MacIntyre sees Trotsky as the embodiment of a revolutionary life, 'providing throughout his life a defence of human activity, of the powers of conscious and rational human effort' (MacIntyre 1960c, p. 166). Despite Trotsky's faults, both theoretical and practical, MacIntyre was prepared, some two decades later in AV, to see Trotsky as an exemplar of virtuous resistance against the contemporary order (MacIntyre 2007).

The refutation of the Soviet Union as socialist, through the heterodox Trotskyist state-capitalist thesis, fed into IS's position on other important contemporary issues. In particular, the IS slogan 'neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism' manifested itself as a unilateralist rejection of the bomb, in contrast to the SLL's support for the Soviet Union's proliferation of such weapons (Birchall 1975). This must have appealed to MacIntyre because, as we have seen, his continual denunciation of the bomb was predicated on the belief that no state with the bomb could be a workers' state. Intellectually and politically, the International Socialists must have seemed an initially hospitable environment for MacIntyre, particularly after his rather fractious parting with the SLL.

IS's second preoccupation, at the time that MacIntyre joined, was with explaining the economic stabilization within the capitalist states—a central concern of Cliff's close associate, Michael Kidron. Kidron had been involved in IS's predecessor, *Socialist Review*, since the mid-1950s.

One of the key debates within IS at its inception was how to explain and respond to a situation of seeming economic stabilization within western countries. It was a debate between Henry Collins, Kidron and MacIntyre that highlighted some of the theoretical and political differences within IS. In this context, Henry Collins argued that the swift collapse of Imperialism from the turn of the twentieth century had been followed, not by economic crisis, but by an 'unprecedented, if partial' situation of economic stability (Collins 1961). Whilst Marx's theory of economic crisis was not redundant, Collins asserted that its tendency to create a revolutionary situation was now just one possibility among many, yet 'by no means the most likely' (Collins 1961). Collins suggested that socialists should welcome, not deplore, the resultant fuller employment and better working conditions that had emerged from changes within the structure of the modern capitalist system. The global challenges provided by emerging nations in Asia, Africa and the middle east, and from 'communism' in Russia, would, argued Collins, provide the conditions that would ensure that progress toward socialism was persistent but 'piecemeal'. Despite claiming that the workers' remained the only revolutionary force in capitalism, Collins asserts that socialism would come about through essentially reformist methods, where capitalism was eventually 'squeezed out' by pressure from below. Such concessions and reforms would eventually alter the balance of class power, claimed Collins, so as to create a situation where capitalist class power and influence would be reduced so that they would no longer dominate the social, political or economic scene (Collins 1961).

Both Kidron and MacIntyre took issues with Collins in their replies within the pages of IS. Kidron was the architect of the permanent arms economy thesis that suggested that cold war arms spending had acted to stabilize capitalism by effectively preventing a decline in the rate of profit. (Kidron 1961; Blackledge and Davidson 2008a, p. xxxix) However, this seemingly pessimistic position was countered through the argument that this was only one side to the modern phenomenon of the permanent arms economy. Twinned with this increased stability was Kidron's assertion that 'the other [feature of the permanent arms economy] is a basic instability, more destructive, more terrible than anything the system has experienced, even during its deepest slumps' (Kidron 1961). Against Collins, Kidron suggested that arms spending would have to grow at an increasing rate to continue to underpin full employment and, empirically, there were already signs that were beginning to bring this possibility into question.

Combined with the structure and militancy of the working class, Kidron claimed, this created a situation that was 'pregnant' with 'revolutionary possibilities'. From Kidron's perspective, Collins' analysis was one-sided in that it overemphasized capitalism's ability to stabilize itself and consequently underestimated the continued revolutionary potential of the working class.

MacIntyre's position in 1961 is much closer to Kidron's—although, as we shall see, this would change within a couple of years. For now, MacIntyre maintained a dialectical understanding of modern capitalism and the resulting possibilities for socialism. MacIntyre accepted, like Kidron, that capitalism could develop specific strategies which might mitigate crises. However, MacIntyre cautioned against understanding capitalism as having fixed limits, beyond which the system might break down, suggesting that an objective tendency toward crisis did not equate to knowing how, when, or even if, such crises might occur. Nevertheless, in developing his 'point of production' argument, MacIntyre maintained that capitalist planning and management could not prevent workers' recognizing that they were unfree under capitalism through their struggles with others at work. Again, it was the crucible of industrial struggle within which workers' might develop a revolutionary consciousness (MacIntyre 1961, p. 195). The key failure of Collins, argued MacIntyre, was falling into the ideological trap of a reformist framework. Reformism as a strategy, argues MacIntyre, is an ideological reflection of a modern capitalism system that has learned a degree of rationalization and control (MacIntyre 1961, p. 190). Socialism, by its very nature, is the revolutionary self-activity of the working class, therefore to accept left-reformism is to reject socialism itself. MacIntyre follows, respectively, Trotsky and Lenin in insisting that a precondition of socialism is a mass revolutionary consciousness as well as the self-activity of the working class.

As previously noted, MacIntyre's most important, specifically Marxist essays were written when he was involved in both the SLL and the New Left, rather than when he had moved on to IS. IS was most important in MacIntyre's thought as the organization within which he gradually developed his rejection, rather than affirmation, of Marxism. MacIntyre's time in the SLL can be broadly characterized as that short period where Marxism was seen as—at least potentially—both theoretically and practical adequate to the task of developing a revolutionary practice. There are exceptions to this rule—there are contributions from within IS that still, at times, seem quite optimistic about Marxism;

in particular, 1966's *Recent Political Thought* is a powerful defense of Marxism against both Stalinist corruption and liberal deformation (MacIntyre 1966). *Marxist Mask and Romantic Face: Lukács on Thomas Mann* is a fine exposition of Goldmann's Pascalian wager and an important essay on how to conceptualize the revolutionary struggle for socialism (MacIntyre 1965). MacIntyre, indeed, never rejected the view that capitalism inherently creates social conflict; it was the possibility of turning that conflict into coherent, revolutionary activity that he was putting into question. In 1967, MacIntyre was arguing that:

> The varying pace of technological development, the varying institutional responses to that development and the changing character of the labour force combine to create in advanced industrial societies all sorts of possibilities of conflict. It does not follow of course that one should expect social disorder. (MacIntyre 1967, pp. 346–347)

Even these kind of assertions were becoming increasingly rare though and more and more came to represent exceptions to the rule in MacIntyre's writings. MacIntyre was becoming increasingly and unmistakeably more critical of Marxism (specifically later Marxists but also, to an extent, Marx too) as the 1960s went on and increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities for socialism. This is perhaps reflected in the fact that, despite being a member of IS until 1968, MacIntyre had seemingly contributed nothing to that journal for four years or so prior to his resignation. Instead, he had published increasingly in 'right-wing' journals such as *The Listener* and *Encounter* (where, ironically, he could be at his most 'Marxist'), as well as within more formal philosophical journals. MacIntyre was not becoming less radical though, if anything, he was coming to the realization that Marxism was not radical enough, and this would form a key part of his continued critique of Marxism.

MacIntyre's last meaningful contribution to IS was in Winter 1963. He would remain on the editorial board, though, for nearly five more years, contributing only the occasional, brief book review during this period. The 1968 summer edition contained a rather perplexed letter to readers to announce his resignation:

> Alasdair MacIntyre has resigned from the Editorial Board of IS. He offers no extended account of why he is resigning now, rather than earlier or

> later, nor has he accepted our invitations to lay out his criticisms of the journal in our columns. But resigned he has. (Harris 1968)

What drove this process of disengagement? The complete picture of MacIntyre's break with Marxism cannot come from a purely textual interpretation. It also cannot come from only looking at those works where Marxism was the specific subject matter. Although it is not a central aim here to explain this process, there are clearly a number of significant issues that contributed, in one way or another, to MacIntyre's break with Marxism.

The danger, in discussing MacIntyre's break with Marxism, is in missing the political context that was interpreted by MacIntyre pessimistically as a result of his own—some would say inadequate—theoretical framework. The equal danger is to discuss MacIntyre's rejection purely in terms of inadequate theoretical interpretation and deficiencies in his Marxism, rather than in aspects of Marxism itself. Neither, on their own, seem adequate; the latter tends to display an unwillingness to take seriously MacIntyre's critique of Marxism on its own terms, while the former misses the important relationship between theory and practice.

Characteristic of MacIntyre's own approach is his attempt to avoid repeating the mistakes that he sees in Marx and later Marxists. One such mistake, applicable to both Marx and Engels and also many later Marxists, was to treat capitalism as an essentially closed system. This meant, argues MacIntyre, Marxists failed to see that capitalism—and capitalists—could consciously change, develop, progress and that this would have far reaching consequences for the relevance of Marx's own analysis of capitalism. What Marx did, and Marxists that followed him, was to assume the 'ultimacy' and 'sufficiency' of the abstract concepts that he developed in his masterwork Capital (MacIntyre 1964b, p. 298). Effectively, argues MacIntyre, both Marx and Marxists had universalized their own categories in precisely the same that Marx argued the political economists had done. This bears similarity to MacIntyre's critique, in *God and the Theologians*, of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. MacIntyre suggests that Bonhoeffer fails to recognize that specific forms of Christianity are only intelligible within specific forms of social life and consequently fail to translate to other contexts (MacIntyre 1963a, p. 23). Marxism, in a similar sense, fails to recognize the inapplicability of its own concepts to a much changed contemporary capitalism. The later Marx, suggests

MacIntyre, had taken from Engels a mechanistic view of historical development—an assumed inevitable progression toward socialism—that had blinded him and his followers to the possibility that capitalism itself could change and adapt. One of MacIntyre's key concerns into the early 1960s was, in attempting to avoid repeating this mistake, to provide an understanding and analysis of *contemporary* capitalism, rather than of an inapplicable model of *historical* capitalism.

A trio of essay published in IS and *Socialist Review* in 1962–1963 provide the clearest understanding of MacIntyre's changing views on contemporary capitalism. Most importantly, MacIntyre was increasingly drawn to the view that capitalism was no longer prone to crises in the same way that it once was (MacIntyre 1962b, 1963c). Whilst MacIntyre continued to accept the viability of Kidron's permanent arms economy thesis and the role it played in stabilizing the economy, MacIntyre extended the reasons as to this stabilization much further (MacIntyre 1963c, p. 257) MacIntyre had seemingly deepened Kidron's analysis but had essentially rejected the corollary of Kidron's position, which was that capitalism nevertheless remained prone to crisis. MacIntyre suggested that economic expertize had created a situation where capitalism's drive for profit could manifest itself, not in terms of an inevitable spiral toward crisis, but in an increasingly stable economic environment. Secondly, MacIntyre argued that the system could be stabilized through technological innovation and the creation of new markets that knew no logical limit—and Marx had not taken this fact into consideration; thirdly, the domestication of trade unions and the incorporation of the working class into the worldview of reformism, within the existing capitalist framework, meant that there was no move toward the development of a revolutionary consciousness (MacIntyre 1963c, pp. 256–257).

Fundamental to MacIntyre's increasingly pessimistic assertions on the prospects for Socialism was his analysis of the class structure and the position of the working class within it. MacIntyre increasingly viewed the emergence of a new group—specific to modern capitalism—of 'corporate controllers' who, possessing great power and ability, 'managed' a new capitalism that could avoid economic crises (MacIntyre 1963d, p. 279). Increasingly important, suggests MacIntyre, are not those who own shares or the means of production but those 'who participate corporately either as owners or managers in the top decision making processes'

(MacIntyre 1962b, p. 222). Yet if this group of skilled managers were important in crisis management, it was MacIntyre's assessment of the working class that would prove more damning for the possibilities of socialism.

Running parallel to an increasingly competent, able and powerful managerial elite was, for MacIntyre, an increasingly docile working class (MacIntyre 1962a, p. 212). However critical MacIntyre was of the Frankfurt School (MacIntyre 1970), it is difficult not to see strong similarities between MacIntyre's arguments and those of, for example, Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man*. Marcuse argued:

> The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive administration of society becomes, the more unimaginable the means and ways by which the administered individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation. (Marcuse 1964a, pp. 6–7)

If MacIntyre never quite assumed the ultra-pessimism of Marcuse, perhaps in the 1960s, in terms of his assessment of working-class revolutionary potential within a changed capitalist society, he came closest to it. Marcuse's pessimism, argues MacIntyre, stems from his one-sided analysis of the contemporary order; Marcuse does not search for the 'negative'—those forces which might destabilize, rather than maintain, the social order. MacIntyre states that Marcuse ends up assuming a position much like that of Talcott Parsons, who sees only the self-maintaining and well-integrated aspects of the social order rather than any prevailing counter tendencies (MacIntyre 1967, p. 344). One might be tempted to say the same about MacIntyre's analysis of the working class in the early 1960s. MacIntyre argued that an increasingly stratified working class had been divided into two groups, the 'oppressed but helpless' and the 'strong but bribed' (MacIntyre 1962a, p. 212). Poverty, argues Macintyre, radicalizes no more than affluence does; indeed, the opposite can be true in that unemployment and wage cuts tend toward distress and, most significantly, apathy (MacIntyre 1963c, p. 258). The stronger, more affluent working class were no more revolutionary; they had been incorporated into a worldview of consumption and gradualism, domesticated through the 'carrot' of high wages and embodied in a reformist trade union structure, content to work within the confines of the system (MacIntyre 1962a, p. 212). Most important, argues Macintyre, was

a mass-media induced, class-stratified school system which fosters a political apathy and acceptance of the status quo, ensuring no single political issue can impinge on workers consciousness. The problem of developing class solidarity was compounded, argued MacIntyre, by this stratification of the working class. Increasing inequality between workers meant that on those issues that the workers might actually be able to win; there was little chance of unity between skilled and unskilled workers. Increasing unemployment amongst unskilled workers, not wanted by industry, meant that such workers had no means through which they could exert their social power (MacIntyre 1962b, p. 227).

MacIntyre believed that trade union power had been greatly decreased due to a number of changes within modern capitalism. Specifically, greater job instability, job mobility and a shift from blue to white-collar work, contributed to a situation where the resources of resistance from within the trade unions had been greatly diminished (MacIntyre 1962b, p. 224). A decrease in trade union power also stemmed from an emerging, corporate capitalism that was able and willing to accept trade unions in a gradualist form, pragmatically co-opting them to fit their own purposes (MacIntyre 1964c, p. 301). MacIntyre argued that what was needed was a politicization of the unions; in the sense of developing political aims that broke from the ideology of reformism and envisaged the creation of specifically working-class institutions. MacIntyre again reiterated his view that resistance needed to be understood and developed at the point of production yet, in order for this to be effective, it had to connect with the wider, political struggles against the system itself (MacIntyre 1962b, p.240). The 'point of production' represented for MacIntyre, as suggested earlier, the point of contact between the 'old' and 'new' capitalism. It is at the core of the relationship between labor and capital that 'the worker does continue to experience all the pressures of capitalism in relation to his actual wants and goals' (MacIntyre 1962c, p. 286). It was in and through such industrial struggles that, MacIntyre asserts, the genuine politics of class is discovered.

It quickly becomes apparent that all of MacIntyre's key arguments about working-class activity, political leadership, human nature and capitalism come together to imbue his Marxism at this stage with a certain precariousness. Specifically, the industrial struggles of the worker at the point of production come to bear a great deal of weight for the prospects of revolutionary activity from MacIntyre's perspective. MacIntyre

has developed a picture of trade union activity and working-class life that is decidedly unrevolutionary, fragmented and apathetic. Nevertheless, his insistence that socialism must be the self-activity of the working class, coupled with his point of production argument, sees no other avenues of possibility for socialism. Reformist methods, on MacIntyre's terms, are simply not socialism; neither is the imposition of socialism by political or intellectual elites, as characterized by certain variants of revolutionary Marxism which MacIntyre had already rejected. Similarly, MacIntyre recognizes that a long-term change in consciousness is one aspect necessary for socialism, yet he simultaneously asserts that it is the essence of modern capitalism that it prevents individual struggles becoming struggles against the system itself.

Nevertheless, despite all the counteracting factors, MacIntyre is left only with the point of production as being able to develop the germ of revolutionary resistance against capitalism. He recognizes that, in their isolated, purely economic form, such industrial struggles do not bring down a system. What is needed is a qualitative shift from localized, industrial, 'bread and butter' struggles, to a broader political struggle against capitalism itself through which the prerequisite revolutionary consciousness might develop. The difficulty here, as seen in MacIntyre's increasing pessimism, is that contemporary capitalism, on his view, dramatically lengthens the odds of any such revolutionary resistance actually developing. So while MacIntyre continues to understand capitalism dialectically, the optimism of how capitalism and human nature might interact, as seen in NFTMW, is beginning to ebb due to capitalism's increasing ability to suppress the development of a revolutionary consciousness. As we saw, MacIntyre's anti-elitist, democratic conception of the party and leadership drew him into the orbit of socialism or Barbarism. Their Theses-on-Feuerbach inspired Marxism was clearly appealing to MacIntyre yet, as others have noted, this surely played a role in his growing political pessimism (Blackledge 2005).

Practically manifested, MacIntyre was wary of a top-down conception of socialism and the potential atomization between intellectual and worker that this entailed. So when Cliff Slaughter argued that: 'the consciousness represented by the Marxist party constitutes a higher consciousness of the historical tasks of the working class than does the immediate consciousness of the class itself' (Slaughter 1960, p. 95), the potential of creating a section of the party that had superior knowledge to the rest, in opposition to how Marx conceived of socialism, was a

real danger to MacIntyre. Slaughter also identified what he saw as a key weakness in an approach that focused on spontaneous resistance at the point of production as endorsed by MacIntyre, warning that:

> Rather than humbly bowing before the experience of the class at 'the point of production', rather than assuming that the workers' own experience will give rise to revolutionary consciousness, Marxists must on the contrary subordinate their political and theoretical work to the revolutionary party. This is the meaning of revolutionary discipline. (Slaughter 1960, p. 95)

Leaving aside, for now, this contentious claim concerning 'revolutionary discipline' and the role of the party, there is still some weight to his critique of the point of production argument. The problem as identified by both Slaughter and Thompson (as we saw earlier) was that MacIntyre had seemingly simplified the complexities of the class struggle to one particular area, therefore reifying the importance of a certain section of resistance at a particular point. MacIntyre, while attempting to guard against a doctrine that 'implies the sharpest of divisions in society between those who know and those who do not', though still formally recognizing the importance of the vanguard party, had weakened the role of that party to one that only gave theoretical expression to the working-class movement and only within a limited and narrow area of conflict. Thompson's point, indeed, is similar to that later made by Brinton (Chris Pallis):

> Alienation in capitalist society is not simply economic. It manifests itself in many other ways. The conflict in production does not "create" or "determine" secondary conflict in other fields. Class domination manifests itself in all fields, at one and the same time. Its effects could not otherwise be understood. (Brinton 1968)

MacIntyre seemingly opens himself up to criticism from both the more 'orthodox' Leninist position and the anti-Leninism of Brinton, Castoriadis and Thompson. The former see his 'weak' conception of the party as being unable to develop the revolutionary potential of the working class; the latter view MacIntyre's conception of revolutionary resistance as being much too narrowly defined in purely economic terms.

MacIntyre's work in the early to mid-1960s is fascinating not least because it presents a rather agonized, even contradictory, understanding of Marxism and the possibilities for revolutionary socialism. What should be clear is that MacIntyre is attempting to maintain a commitment to socialism (conceived as the self-activity of the working class) in the face of what he himself interprets as an increasingly hostile and barren environment for socialism. Several interrelated factors come together in MacIntyre's Marxism to seemingly create a perfect storm of political pessimism. MacIntyre's analysis of modern capitalism and its ability to manage crises out of existence, combined with what he sees as a docile, apathetic working class, unable to develop a revolutionary consciousness and an 'informed' desire, provide the key empirical pivots on which his pessimism turns. Theoretically, these were interpreted through the lens of his commitment to the point of production argument and his understanding of revolutionary leadership. The result was, perhaps inevitably from this perspective, a growing sense in MacIntyre that Marxism was becoming untenable. If MacIntyre was to maintain his commitment to Marxism, he would have had to do something quintessentially un-MacIntyrean. We have seen, from M:AI, one of MacIntyre's key concerns with Marxism was that Marxists were either unable or unwilling to reformulate their theories and became blind to change. In the face of what, on MacIntyre's theoretical interpretation, was an increasingly empirically unjustifiable commitment to socialism, MacIntyre was never going to be willing to go down the well-trodden path of dogma and refuse to reformulate—or if necessary, abandon—his theories. Similarly, there could be no question that MacIntyre might incorporate a different political strategy and reformulate his view on revolutionary leadership. MacIntyre has always given primacy to human agency and those Hegelian concepts of practical consciousness; any kind of elitist view of the relationship between worker and party would be anathema to this. Besides, even if a different conception of revolutionary leadership was able to create a more revolutionary environment, this would certainly not be socialism which must, as Marx suggested in the ToF, be the self-activity of the working class.

It is unclear to what extent MacIntyre's personal experiences of revolutionary organizations, and those who inhabited them, contributed to MacIntyre's increasing distance from Marxism. Clearly the SLL, under Healy, was representative of what MacIntyre saw as being a problem not just with individuals, but with these types of organizations as *such*, in

terms of their size and structure. What we can say, at the time, this did not put MacIntyre off organized politics as he moved straight into IS from the SLL, apparently with some degree of enthusiasm. Indeed, MacIntyre still remembers—and fondly—a number of his friends and colleagues from these Marxist organizations, suggesting there was much that MacIntyre still regards as positive from his Marxist days (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183). Nevertheless, MacIntyre did experience more than his share of sectarian vitriol and general hostility from those on the left. Furthermore, it is clear that MacIntyre looks back on discussions within such organizations as becoming increasingly 'barren' even when conducted with those most 'insightful' of Marxists (MacIntyre 2011, p. 174).

Perhaps the final break with Marxism was most definitively signaled in MacIntyre's 1966 book, *A Short History of Ethics*. Here, on top of his increasingly pessimistic analysis of contemporary capitalism, MacIntyre ultimately rejected the very foundations on which an ethical, revolutionary Marxism might be built. ASHOE, as others have claimed, is a thoroughly relativistic work (Lutz 2004, p. 24). It is published at a time when MacIntyre, though still a member of IS has, in reality, all but given up on Marxism as a political practice (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a, p. xliii). One of MacIntyre's key claims here is that there can be no objective basis for morality, as there can be no appeal 'to human nature as a neutral standard' from which to judge such claims (MacIntyre 1991, p. 268). As we have seen, this reverses 1958s search for such a basis, located in the class struggle, through which the working class might begin to develop a third moral position beyond Stalinism and liberal anti-Stalinism. The significant corollary of MacIntyre's view in 1966, which he would continue to develop, is that Marxism consequently oscillates between Kantian and utilitarian approaches to ethics, both of which are unsatisfactory. So while ASHOE was at a loss to provide any alternative to MacIntyre's rather unhappy assessment of modernity, AV was concerned with outlining this alternative in the form of the three concepts of telos, practice and tradition that might create the possibility of rational, moral coherence.

The remastered M:AI, published in 1968 as *Marxism and Christianity*, the year that MacIntyre finally broke with IS, contains further evidence of MacIntyre's increasing distance from Marxism as theory and practice. Whilst Marx himself does not escape criticism, MaC is perhaps the clearest example of MacIntyre defending what he sees

as the rational, revolutionary core of the early Marx against its—eventually fatal—deformation at the hands of later Marxists—particularly Engels but also a number of twentieth-century Marxists such as Kautsky, Bernstein and even Trotsky. MacIntyre sees Engels as attempting to claim Marxism as Science with Marx himself, on Engels interpretation, doing for the social sciences what Darwin did for the natural sciences. This leads MacIntyre to suggest that it is Engels who is chiefly responsible for the predictive and mechanistic formulas that would define Marxism for the next half century. Marx, too, bears some responsibility here, because he mistakenly viewed Engels as an authentic interpreter of his own work (MacIntyre 1995, p. 88).

In MaC, MacIntyre restates some of the criticisms of Marxism that, as we have seen, he was developing from the early 1960s. Specifically, there are two major, interrelated difficulties face by Marxism on which hinge a number of further criticisms that MacIntyre makes. Firstly, the impotence of Marxist economic theory (as opposed to Marx's own skill as economic theorist and historian) in its assertion about capitalism's tendency to crises; even if it did prove that capitalism was still inherently unstable, the counterpart to this economic theory is the Marxist prediction that such crises would necessitate the development of a revolutionary, working-class consciousness (MacIntyre 1995, p. 119). This, MacIntyre states, has clearly not happened. Marxists were blind to the reformist and essentially unpolitical nature of the working class. Most importantly, argues MacIntyre in echoing his earlier arguments, Marxists were blind to the post-war, self-conscious capitalism that finally dispelled the notion of an 'unplanned' capitalism unable to manage the system or placate the working class (MacIntyre 1995, pp. 120–121). In the face of this decidedly unrevolutionary situation, Marxists tended to resort to various auxiliary hypotheses that might explain away the gap between theory and practice. The effect of this, suggests MacIntyre, was that Marxist theory had lost its original purpose of giving expression to an actually existing movement, of articulating the explicit political and moral stances taken by people within specific social situations that had been forced upon them due to their class position. Marxism had become, essentially, a 'talismanic aid' that was disconnected from social practice (MacIntyre 1995, p.123), reflecting nothing more than the privately held opinions of individuals in much the same way that religion now did. On MacIntyre's view, Marxism had been transformed, or was

in the process of being transformed, into an ideology. As MacIntyre suggested in the 1995 introduction to a new edition of MaC, Marxism had become a 'free-floating body of thought' detached from the 'contexts of practice' in which it was formed, which originally provided the possibility of informing, directing and understanding the working-class struggle against capitalism (MacIntyre 1995, p. xxxix).

Marxism, argues MacIntyre, had come to reflect the individualized standpoint of modernity, the ethos of the modern world, of which Kantianism and utilitarianism were the dominant moral frameworks. Macintyre asserts that 'Marxism was overcome by and assimilated itself to the modes of thought of the very society of which it sought to be a critique' (MacIntyre 1995, p. 130). Macintyre returns to the base–superstructure metaphor to illustrate what he means here. If liberalism separated the economic and the political, as seen in their conception of state and market, Marxists repeated this in their separation of base from superstructure. The primacy given to the economic base, as seen in the deterministic, mechanized view of history so prominent in Stalinism, was evidence of Marxism retaining a separation of the economic and political developed from classical bourgeois society (MacIntyre 1995, pp. 136–137). Marxism had proved itself unable to move beyond these limitations set by bourgeois society.

MacIntyre claims that it was the rejection of Marx's Hegelian inheritance by future Marxists which left Marxism unable to provide a distinctive moral standpoint (as MacIntyre thought that it might a decade earlier). This is because it was the Hegelian-Marxist concept of human nature that might provide the foundations from which a third moral position, distinct from Kantianism and utilitarianism, could be developed. Unlike Marx's own understanding of socialism as the overcoming of alienation in the present, later Marxists put the moral goals of socialism in the future, argues MacIntyre, therefore adopting the utilitarian preoccupation with consequences rather than actions themselves. The only other alternative available to Marxists was through the kind of inadequate Kantian appeals for socialism that Macintyre had already identified and criticized in NFTMW. While MacIntyre continues to suggest that, at least in Marx's own thought, an interpretation of Marxism that can potentially avoid the distinctive failures of liberal modernity is visible; he effectively rejects the possibility that this might be developed into a coherent alternative from within the resources of Marxism. It is not Marxists that might be able to reconstruct Marx's undeveloped notion of

revolutionary practice; if an alternative is to be found it must come from a theory and practice capable of resisting the standpoint of civil society in a way that Marxism, in the end, could not.

One of the fundamental dilemmas at the heart of Marxism, argues MacIntyre, is the question of the transition from capitalism to socialism; In *Capital*, for example, MacIntyre claims there is an 'astonishing lacuna' whenever this question is raised (MacIntyre 1995, p. 85). Marx's confidence that capitalism would replace socialism stopped short of providing any kind of political guide or programme as to how this might actually happen. This future difficulty, handed down from Marx to his heirs, stems from Marx's assertions on the nature of socialism. For Marx, socialism is the overcoming of alienation in the present through the self-activity of the working class. This explains Marx's reticence to concretize ideas as to how such a transition to socialism might take place. For if the emancipation of the working class can only be the task of the working class themselves, Marx's refusal to preformulate any path to socialism is understandable, indeed essential. So just as Historical Materialism might provide a *basis* for developing a theory of socialist society, it does not itself constitute such a theory (Fracchia and Ryan 1992, p. 52), nor does it provide a theory as to the nature of that transition. Marx, argues MacIntyre, 'bequeathed to his heirs' an untheorized future, in terms of how to bridge the gap between the present and the future, about which a number of incompatible and defective solutions were developed (MacIntyre 1995, pp. 95–96); the Engels-inspired 'super-predictions' where a predetermined future socialism would come in just as surely as the tide; Luxemburg's faith in the spontaneity of the working class to bridge such a gap; Kautsky's determinism or Bernstein's revisionism. Each, though, was faced with the pressing problem of the gap between Marx's predictions and a social reality that seemed to deny the validity of those predictions.

Lukács, suggests MacIntyre, had a quite different kind of response, one that was not dependent on the predictive power of Marx's own theories (MacIntyre 1995, p. 97) and one we will explore more fully later. In opposition to Engels, Lukács, suggests MacIntyre, believed that the truth of Marx's analyses were independent from their predictive power. Socialism, on Lukácsian terms, was not a future constructed through determinant laws, nor mechanistically through a passive working class; rather, socialism was intentionally, self-consciously constructed by a working class who had broken through the mystifications and reification

of capitalist society. This effectively allowed Lukács to separate Marx's predictions from Marxism as the latter was nothing more than the articulation of working-class consciousness. It is here, in what MacIntyre characterizes as these essentially inadequate responses to the problem of the transition from capitalism to socialism, that MacIntyre outlines what is one of his most lasting criticisms of Marxism. In failing to extrapolate from the past to their beliefs about the future, Marxists tend to adopt one of two inadequate positions represented at one side by Kautsky, at the other by Lukács. Kautsky's confidence in the 'objective march' of history lays the foundations, at its most extreme, for Stalinism's deification of history.

MacIntyre means here by deification what Popper means by unscientific—Marxism becomes unfalsifiable, when evidence conflicts with Marxist theory, it is the evidence that is explained away rather than the theory brought into question. The alternative, Lukácsian position results in a deification of the party (MacIntyre 1995, p. 101). For if the revolutionary consciousness does not develop as predicted, it is transplanted from the working class to the party itself which becomes the 'true' expression of revolutionary consciousness; the party, in effect, is taken to represent the most advanced sections of the working class and consequently it is the party that is unfalsifiable. This, in practice, is the path Lukács himself took in his renunciation of HCC and his capitulation to Stalinism (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 163). These criticisms will be explored much further in the next chapter when we turn to the five-point critique of Marxism that MacIntyre outlines in After Virtue.

By 1970, MacIntyre had reached his most sharply pessimistic, with the characteristically brilliantly written but also highly paradoxical *Marcuse*. One reviewer of MacIntyre's work, Jeffrey Stout, amusingly wrote that the main thesis of MacIntyre's book on Marcuse, written as it was for the Modern Masters series 'seems to have been that Marcuse does not deserve inclusion among the modern masters' (Stout 1989, p. 222). In *Marcuse*, MacIntyre criticizes the titular subject for his characterization of as being 'internally homogenous' and for 'seeing such societies as among the most highly integrated in human history' (MacIntyre 1970, p. 70). The thrust of MacIntyre's critique is that Marcuse's assertion that capitalism had assimilated 'all those who in earlier forms of social order provided either voices or forces of

dissent' is based on a wholly inaccurate characterization of capitalism (MacIntyre 1970, p. 63). Marcuse is accused of being a 'pre-Marxist' for his elitism which, according to MacIntyre, amounts to only Marcuse and a select enlightened few being aware of the strength of modern capitalist society (MacIntyre 1970, p. 64). Yet the position that MacIntyre then assumes is one of profound pessimism, arguing that those 'agents of liberation' that Marcuse identifies (intellectuals, students, slum-dwellers) amount to little more than 'petty-bourgeois bohemia closely allied to the lumpenproletariat … and parent-financed revolts' (MacIntyre 1970, p. 89). It is also not difficult to see that the kind of capitalist society that Marcuse is describing is not too far removed from MacIntyre's own, earlier analysis, however strong his criticisms of Marcuse might be. Here, it seems that MacIntyre has almost completely rejected a dialectical understanding of capitalism; seeing it as essentially a one-sided, alienating system that stands in sharp contrast to his political optimism a decade earlier.

MacIntyre's polemic is an interesting paradox. It affirms many Marxist-influenced beliefs, particularly the anti-elitism of Marx, yet it seemingly denies the possibility for any change from capitalism whatsoever. It dismisses Marxism as a now invalid and ideologically deformed theory, yet it also dismisses any type of protest—student or otherwise—for reasons that one might think would lead to MacIntyre making an assertion that only the working class can be the agents of change, yet it does not as this possibility has already been discounted. What MacIntyre manages to do, seemingly, is adopt a position so highly critical and negative as to negate the possibility for any change at all. From such a position, it is not difficult to see how MacIntyre comes to the conclusion: 'It follows that by the present time to be faithful to Marxism we have to now cease to be Marxists; and whoever now remains a Marxist has thereby discarded Marxism' (MacIntyre 1970, p. 61).

MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism began with an attempt to pick out what he saw as the most valuable, revolutionary and prophetic elements of Christianity and the early Marx. In the early 1950s, MacIntyre was concerned with rescuing the revolutionary, humanist core of Marxism from its degeneration at the hands of later, deterministic and dogmatic forms of Marxism. The debates within the New Left saw MacIntyre responding to the concrete problem of Stalinism and

what he regarded as the inadequate ethical responses to it from within socialism. Increasingly, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, MacIntyre came to believe that it was only within some kind of revolutionary Marxist organization that the working class could effectively impinge on the class struggle and develop a revolutionary Marxist ethics and political practice.

Throughout this period, it was the Hegelian Marx that continued to provide, for MacIntyre, the only adequate understanding of history and human agency. Beyond the traditional boundaries of Marxism, MacIntyre was centrally concerned with providing an adequate understanding of human action which took in other philosophical schools, both analytic and idealist. Yet also present was the figure of Aristotle and the Greeks more generally, who would come into focus much more in his later work and from whom MacIntyre developed the idea of reconnecting morality with desire. As he moved into revolutionary Marxists organizations, the figures of Lenin and Trotsky would become increasingly important to MacIntyre's thought. Yet it was a specific form of Leninism that MacIntyre endorsed, much influenced by the socialism or barbarism groupings inspired by Castoriadis and his comrades. MacIntyre seemed much closer to Castoriadis than his own IS grouping at times. Indeed, at what was supposed to be a 'debate' between Solidarity's Cardan (Castoriadis) and IS's MacIntyre on the former's *Capitalism and Revolution*, one comrade 'deplored' the presence of 'two Cardans' (Solidarity 1965, p. 22). Nevertheless, MacIntyre's time in the SLL and the very early days of IS saw him at his most 'Marxist' and politically optimistic. The end of the 1950s and the early 1960s saw the Marxist MacIntyre at his most intellectually powerful, with a trio of key essays that aimed to defend and expound a revolutionary humanist interpretation of Marxism as a model for ethical and political action.

Yet as the 1960s wore on, MacIntyre's optimism turned to pessimism and by the end of the 60s he had left organized politics for good. He had come to believe that the working class were no longer the agent of revolutionary change in a self-consciously adapted modern capitalist world. Marxism, MacIntyre believed, had become a caricature of itself, no longer politically relevant and philosophically ill-equipped to deal with the changes in late modernity. He had, seemingly, moved away from viewing the prophetic nature of Marxism as what was most fundamentally valuable, rejected the 'wager' on the working class (MacIntyre 1964), and substituted his humanistic belief in socialism for an altogether more empirically minded political pessimism. MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism

never meant that he had made peace with capitalism. While he came to reject the idea that Marxism provided the possibility for the working class to move beyond Pascal and Racine's tragic vision of being trapped in their immediate situation (Goldmann 1964, p. 302), he was not prepared to assume the antithesis of 'tragic man' which was to 'accept the world as it is, rather than longing for the world as it might be' (Evans 1981, p. 60). Instead, for a time, MacIntyre was left without any conception of how change might come about. His view of Marxism had, in some ways, come to reflect his view about Christianity, of which he stated: 'we cannot do with Christianity in the modern world, but often cannot do without it entirely either' (MacIntyre 1964d, p. 69). MacIntyre in some ways came to epitomize such a tragic vision. Nevertheless, as he continued to reject Marxism's predictive pretensions to science, MacIntyre would go on to provide a much deeper analysis of Marxism's political and philosophical inadequacies to the modern capitalist world.

I would suggest that none of these observations necessarily mean that MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism was ill-founded or premature, at least not without developing a fuller picture of his engagement with Marxism. At most, perhaps, what we can see so far is how MacIntyre's specific understanding of Marxism had some kind of correlation with his increasing pessimism about the possibilities for socialism in the mid to late 1960s. MacIntyre's body of work is much too rich, complex and, most importantly, replete with continuity, to understand his Marxism only through what he has written up to the late 1960s; nevertheless, this early period remains hugely important to discussions of both his continued commitment to aspects of Marxism and the extension of his critique of Stalinism to all forms of Marxism in certain key ways. Many of the reasons that MacIntyre gives for his rejection of Marxism are developed much more fully in his post-Marxist period. His 'revolutionary Aristotelianism' (Knight 2007), and his critique of the state and modern morality, for example, are predicated to a certain extent on the inadequacies of Marxism, as well as what MacIntyre suggests remains of value within the resources of Marxism. AV contains—in a highly distilled form—the essence of what is most durable and stable in MacIntyre's contemporary assessment of Marxism. This is one reason why After Virtue is taken as the starting point from which MacIntyre's five-point critique of Marxism is discussed and which forms the basis of the second part of the book. To end the discussion of MacIntyre's relationship with Marxism in the late 1960s would be just as one-sided as beginning the discussion of his contemporary work with AV.

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CHAPTER 5

The Critique of Marxism in After Virtue

MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism did not end with his resignation from IS. What did end, sometime in the mid to late 1960s, was MacIntyre's belief in the possibility of developing an ethical, revolutionary Marxist practice from within the resources of modernity. Arguably, this belief had ended a few years before MacIntyre made his official, and final, break with revolutionary socialist organizations. Yet Marxism remains, in some ways, as central to MacIntyre's post-Marxist period as it was to that optimistic period of the late 1950s and very early 1960s. A correlative of this claim is that MacIntyre's revolutionary Aristotelianism, which he has been developing at least since AV, only makes sense if it is understood through the lens of the Marxist framework he developed in the 1950s and 1960s; whether one accepts MacIntyre's critique and rejection of Marxism or not, the continued centrality of aspects of Marx is undeniable.

As MacIntyre and Lutz (in his commentary on AV) have both noted, there are two components to Marxism (Lutz 2012, p. 12; MacIntyre 2007, p. xvi). Firstly, there is Marxism as a political project and, secondly, Marxism as a kind of critical and philosophical tool for understanding capitalism. MacIntyre's intellectual history can perhaps be characterized in three stages of differing relationships to these two components. Firstly, in the 1950s and 1960s during his Marxist period, as an adherent to both; from the 1970s to the 1980s, arguably as an adherent to aspects of the second but not the first, and thirdly; his contemporary position, as rejecting Marxism as a political project while reaffirming, rediscovering even, his commitment to certain aspects of Marx's intellectual and

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_5

critical resources. This rejection of Marxist politics is not to say that MacIntyre has somehow become less radical or indeed less critical of the contemporary moral, economic and political order.

MacIntyre is, and always has been, a vociferous critic of modern liberal, capitalist society and its associated morality (MacIntyre 2016). His intellectual career has been concerned with attempting to theorize a practical alternative, or at least to sketch the premises from which such an alternative might begin, to a contemporary order that, he maintains, is both morally incoherent and degenerative to those that live within it. As we have seen, MacIntyre's historical position was that it was within Marxism that such an alternative could potentially be found. MacIntyre's contemporary position is that it is only with the resources provided by Aquinas and Aristotle that we might achieve what Marxism in the end could not and develop an ethical and political challenge and alternative to the standpoint of modernity (albeit in a different form from that envisaged by Marx). To put it slightly differently, MacIntyre now believes that it is only through some kind of Thomist and Aristotelian-formulated concept of revolutionary practice that something like the type of ethical resistance to the capitalist order that Marx envisaged can be achieved. The task of revolutionary Aristotelianism is to complete Marx's project.

Nevertheless, MacIntyre offers two competing, though far from distinct, visions of how it might become possible to develop and concretize Marx's conception of revolutionary practice. They are far from distinct because they both come from different incarnations of MacIntyre himself—one historical and one contemporary. As we have seen, the historical vision is rooted in the claim that Marxism, in a certain form, contains the potential to develop an ethical, revolutionary practice, as both Marx and the historical MacIntyre believed it would. Those who look to the historical MacIntyre are in the minority. Yet, this was a possibility, as we have already seen, that MacIntyre himself took very seriously therefore we should take the dismissal of that possibility very seriously too. This is something that is taken up, to an extent, in the concluding chapter of the book.

The contemporary MacIntyre of AV and beyond is much more familiar than the 'unknown' Marxist MacIntyre (Blackledge and Davidson 2008a, p. xiii). I would suggest that it is through MacIntyre's most pressing questions of Marxism that he begins to point toward a form of revolutionary practice that Marxists would do well to engage with. It is

in the complex and wide-ranging analysis and critique of liberal modernity, its moral philosophy and its institutions that MacIntyre highlights why we need not only Marx, but Aristotle, to develop the kind of resistance to the contemporary order that Marxists strive for. This chapter is largely framed around a discussion of MacIntyre's five-point critique of Marxism that he outlines in AV. We can then see how, in those Thomistic-Aristotelian solutions, Marx remains of great value to the post-Marxist MacIntyre.

Each criticism will be located, developed and explained within the context of MacIntyre's wider body of work both previous to and beyond AV. There are five core, interrelated criticisms that MacIntyre explicitly makes of Marxism in AV. Although MacIntyre has continued to develop these throughout the years following the publication of AV in 1981—and he has done so in important ways—the essence of these criticisms remains largely unchanged; therefore they can be taken to represent what MacIntyre continues to see as the key failings of Marxism. The summary of these criticisms appears across scarcely two pages in AV:

Firstly: That Marxism, though claiming a distinctive moral standpoint, in practice proves, through its responses to historical events—the critique of Stalin and the events of Hungary 1956—that 'Marxists have always fallen back into relatively straightforward versions of Kantianism or Utilitarianism'. Secondly: Neither Marx, nor Marxists after him, gave any practical conception of how his vision of a community of free individuals was to be constructed. Indeed, on what grounds, other than an appeal to Kantian or universal principles, could an appeal to individuals be made to enter into this form of community? In close relation to the first criticism, therefore, for MacIntyre it is unsurprising those 'abstract moral principles and utility have in fact been the principles of association which Marxism has appealed to'. Thirdly: 'As Marxists move towards power they tend to become Weberians'. Fourthly: As a result of the 'moral impoverishment of advanced capitalism' it becomes difficult to assert where exactly those preconditions for a better future are going to come from. Fifthly: Due to these conditions of moral impoverishment prevalent in Capitalism, 'Marxism tends to produce its own versions of the Übermensch: Lukács's ideal proletariat, Lenin's ideal revolutionary' (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 261–262).

Quite clearly, all these themes are somewhat recognizable to anyone familiar with MacIntyre's Marxist period. The first problem was taken up most directly by MacIntyre in NFTMW. Closely related, it was the

interaction of capitalism and human nature that MacIntyre once thought could potentially avoid the dilemma outlined in the second criticism. The fourth criticism is clearly building on MacIntyre's increasingly pessimistic outlook during the 1960s concerning the possibility of developing socialism from within the resources of modern capitalism. The third and the fifth criticisms echo MacIntyre's earlier concerns with the nature of revolutionary leadership, the revolutionary party and the relationship of that party to the working class in both philosophy and practice. Indeed, none of the criticisms are purely political nor are they purely a matter of inadequate or undeveloped Marxist theory; perhaps more accurately, they all reflect what is, for MacIntyre, the relationship of an inadequate, incomplete or otherwise somehow defective Marxist theory to a misconceived political practice or misunderstood social and economic reality.

I begin with the second of MacIntyre's criticisms of Marxism as this logically informs a number of the other criticisms in various ways. If what MacIntyre calls 'informed desire' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 176), the kind of deeper, 'discovered' human desire for alternative social and economic arrangements in the form of the 'community of free individuals'—cannot develop within modernity, then the nature of those appeals to enter into such a community must necessarily assume either Kantian or utilitarian form. Both of these, as MacIntyre has argued previously, are an inadequate basis for morality. MacIntyre outlines what he believed—and still believes—is a fundamental lacuna in Marx's thought specifically and Marxism more generally:

> In the first chapter of Capital when Marx characterizes what it will be like when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations what he pictures is 'a community of free individuals' who have all freely agreed to their common ownership of the means of production and to various norms of production and distribution. This free individual is described by Marx as a socialized Robinson Crusoe; but on what basis he enters into his free association with others Marx does not tell us. At this key point in Marxism there is a lacuna which no later Marxist has adequately supplied. (MacIntyre 2007, p. 261)

To fully understand how MacIntyre comes to such a conclusion it is important to recognize a number of premises on which it is based. These premises are not readily apparent in AV itself; it is necessary to look not only before, but beyond, AV to fully appreciate the thoroughgoing

nature of this critique. It is tempting on a cursory glance to agree that MacIntyre's treatment of Marxism in AV is, as one critic put it, 'breezy and glib' (Adamson 1985, p. 1). Yet it is surely true that much of the thrust of AV's argument is, though not always explicit, nevertheless directed to a much more serious critique of Marxism.

It seems the question that MacIntyre essentially asks here in AV is: How, from within late modernity, can we—if at all—become the type of human beings who might actively desire socialism, or some other radically different social and economic arrangements? As it was in AV, MacIntyre's contemporary view is that Marxism offers no substantive answer to this question that does not slip into utilitarian justifications or Kantian appeals. As MacIntyre put it in 1968, his view then, as now, was that there is an 'astonishing lacuna' in both the Marx of *Capital* and later Marxists, whenever the question of the transition to socialism is raised (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 85). The consequence of this is that, because capitalism 'miseducates and wrongly directs desire' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 108), we can no longer become—except in very specific circumstances—the kind of people who might move from 'untutored' to 'authentic' desire (Murphy 2003b, p. 6), the latter of which is a necessary precondition to desiring entry into Marx's community of free individuals. If, suggests MacIntyre, we can no longer develop the kind of informed desire through which socialism might become an authentic, human aim, then it necessarily becomes incumbent on others—the revolutionary party, for example—to 'persuade' people to their project. This is something we will focus on when we discuss Marxism and Weberianism, along with Marxism's association with the Nietzschean Übermensch. As we have discussed previously, this contradicts what MacIntyre sees as the very essence of socialism—the *self-activity* of the working class. The moral appeal to socialism is therefore not simply incoherent or inadequate; it becomes something other than socialism conceived in these terms. In order to fully appreciate MacIntyre's criticism of Marxism here it needs to be unpacked significantly and contextualized within his wider body of work. One way to do this is to think about MacIntyre's critique in terms of what, in the 1950s, he called deeper 'human' desire and much more recently calls 'informed' desire (MacIntyre 1959a, 2011).

Replying to Callinicos, MacIntyre states that NFTMW was an 'enterprise of supplying Marxism with a transhistorical meta-ethics' the starting-point of which was 'a conception of informed desires' that shared

much with James Griffin's account of Well-Being (MacIntyre 2011, p. 176); this concept of desire means, as MacIntyre states in quoting Griffin, those desires that 'persons would have if they appreciated the true nature of their object' (Griffin in MacIntyre 2011, p. 176). The problem of informed desire in Marxism is therefore, as Brudney has called it, the 'problem of justification'. For if people are unable to develop the kind of revolutionary consciousness through which socialism becomes a need then Marxism fails to break with the standpoint of civil society's dominant moral frameworks. Brudney sums this problem up as being 'the reasons, or rather the lack of reasons, at least here and now, in a capitalist society' that people would have to accept such a community of free individuals. It is primarily concerned with 'Marx's ability to appeal to the standpoint of a true communist society as the grounding for his conception of the good life' (Brudney 2001, p. 364). This is a problem that Knight, following MacIntyre's argument, also forcefully reiterates, stating that Marxism cannot justify the taking of the 'first step' that an individual must make toward such a community (Knight 2000, p. 86). It will be immediately clear to those familiar with NFTMW that MacIntyre's assertions represent an about-face from his early, Marxist days. As we have seen, NFTMW developed an argument that the working class might 'discover' a conception of 'human' desire through the class struggle within and against capitalism. From within the resources of Marxism, MacIntyre believed in the 1950s, it became possible to understand how one might become the kind of rational agent whose desires have undergone the revolutionary transformation necessary to move from uninformed to informed desire thus potentially addressing the problem of justification. Such a transformation hinged, for MacIntyre, on a Marxist analysis of the dialectical interaction between a socialized and historicized human nature and capitalism.

MacIntyre argued that capitalism potentially provided a 'form of life' through which people could 'rediscover desire' in such a way as to discover 'above all what they want most is what they want in common with others' (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 95). It was this socialized form of desire—the desire to be neither alienated from each other or ones' self—that could potentially help individuals to discover that what they actually want are new forms of community and radically different social and economic arrangements. These forms of life, or arenas of struggle against capital, played the same kind of transformative role as that of a practice in AV (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 187–193), albeit on a qualitatively different

scale, in that it is within such forms of life that a socialized, 'informed' desire can potentially take hold. At least from ASHOE onwards, MacIntyre has rejected any possibility of a mass transformation of desire as envisaged by Marxism and worked toward developing a concrete, if arguably highly particularistic, alternative.

There is clearly a substantial gap between the conception of revolutionary practice conceived by the contemporary MacIntyre and the Marxian understanding of a revolutionary transformation of society. Marxists find this problematic, in that MacIntyre's 'necessarily particularistic' politics cannot even 'imagine revolution' (Callinicos 2011, p. 44). Clearly, MacIntyre rejects the possibility of any large-scale transformation—and he has been fairly consistent on this for about half a century now. What we need to understand is how MacIntyre arrives at his conclusion that Marxism is no longer able to address the problems of informed desire and justification highlighted above. This is rather a multifaceted task that incorporates a number of interlinked criticisms of Marxism; it is not simply a critique of Marxist politics but also of Marxism's philosophical inadequacies. Broadly speaking, MacIntyre suggests there are three fundamental failings of Marxism that are relevant here: Marx's philosophical failure to develop his own ideas on revolutionary practice; Marxists' subsequent failure to explain and understand modern capitalism; Marxism's inadequacy in explaining human action and its inattention to the meaning and application of Aristotelian concepts such as 'good' and 'flourishing'.

A good place to start is with the third of these criticisms as, in one sense, it is foundational to the others. MacIntyre now sees Marxism as being unable to provide an adequate philosophical account and ordering of human well-being or flourishing (MacIntyre 1971b, 2016). One consequence of this philosophical failing is that Marxism, suggests MacIntyre, cannot recognize its own political inapplicability to the modern world. In order to reach this conclusion, MacIntyre argues that any adequate understanding of informed desire requires, foundationally, a level of philosophical understanding of specific concepts, their content and how they are formed, that Marxism cannot provide yet which the Aristotelian tradition can. A significant recent essay, where MacIntyre sheds light on NFTMW and the problem of informed desire, is 2011s *Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Need to Be*. Here, MacIntyre argues that Callinicos's attempt to develop any kind of Marxist ethical project is, just as MacIntyre's own project in NFTMW was, 'doomed to failure'

(MacIntyre 2011, p. 176). One fundamental weakness with his own earlier Marxist project, argues MacIntyre, was that its starting-point was a set of informed desires which would satisfy this account of well-being, rather than an initial account of what well-being or flourishing actually was.

Callinicos argues that MacIntyre's aborted attempt at reconnecting morality and desire could potentially be rethought through James Griffin's concept of Wellbeing; that is, 'by opening a space for reflection on the kind of desires we should have and – closely associated – the kind of person we should be' (Callinicos 2011, p. 42). Callinicos, as MacIntyre argues he himself once did, makes the mistake of assuming a starting point of informed desire; whereas what is actually needed is a conception of wellbeing, an understanding of the type and meaning of human flourishing through which it becomes possible to develop such informed desire. MacIntyre states 'we need first to know what human well-being, human flourishing, is, if we are to be able to characterize those desires that it is good for us to satisfy' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 176). Human flourishing or well-being consists in a number of individual and common goods—physical, intellectual, moral and such—and it is only as our desires are redirected toward the pursuit of such goods that we become the kind of people who are able to achieve those goods. What individuals have to learn is:

> how to direct their questioning so that they identify correctly – at the level of practice – the ends that they are to pursue as the object of their desires, learning also how to transform their desires so that they are rightly directed. (MacIntyre 2016, p. 90)

Essentially, it is only as we pursue a particular set of individual and common goods that uninformed desire can become informed desire. To flourish is not only to pursue certain individual and common goods; it is also constituted by rational enquiry into what flourishing consists in (MacIntyre 2016, p. 26). For MacIntyre, the development of informed desire is predicated on an account of human flourishing in terms of both the content and meaning of what it is to flourish, as well as the way that such debates about the nature of flourishing are conducted.

The lack of philosophical attention to concepts such as good and flourishing has two detrimental consequences for Marxism. Firstly, Marxism fails to understand that what is good, what it is to flourish as a human being, might be achieved in forms of economic and social

arrangements quite different to that of socialism. MacIntyre suggests that Marxism is closed to the possibility that rational self-determination and the concrete content of the good life might create a conception of informed desire for other forms of life distinct from socialism. In a 2008 reply to Blackledge, MacIntyre argues that Marx, Engels and Lenin all took it for granted that the goals of the working class and the goals of communism would coincide. When this did not happen, it was not in Marxism's remit to change the goals themselves but, instead, explain the desire for such new goals in terms of ideological distortion (MacIntyre 2008, p. 270). This meant that socialism, conceived in terms of the self-activity of the working class, had been rejected by Marxism. A fundamental aspect of revolutionary practice in MacIntyrean terms—as pointed toward by Marx in the ToF—is that workers must pursue their own goals rather than assent to some predetermined ends passed down by revolutionaries. Fundamental to this process is the asking and answering of Aristotelian questions:

> 'What is our common good?' and with it the questions "Who are we?" and "What must our relationship be to those with whom we share this common good?" and "What virtues do we therefore need?" (MacIntyre 2008, pp. 270–271)

Whatever the answers to these questions, for MacIntyre, the important point is that they are asked and answered by the working class themselves. For the contemporary MacIntyre, it is only the Aristotelian tradition that asks such questions in such a way, therefore enabling people to think through for themselves the meaning and content of concepts such as good and flourishing. From this perspective, MacIntyre's Marxist project of the 1950s and his understanding of informed desire was hamstrung, and fatally so, by adopting the Marxist assumption that socialism must be the end-goal which itself misunderstood the relationship between desire and flourishing.

It is worth noting that the critique of Marxism here does not only stem from MacIntyre's assertions concerning the superiority of the Aristotelian tradition; it is also rooted in what MacIntyre sees, much earlier, as the strengths of two other philosophical schools in explaining human action: the 'ordinary language' philosophers influenced by Wittgenstein such as Ryle and Austin and secondly, the British idealist tradition, specifically Collingwood. MacIntyre suggests, in the

introduction to part two of 1971s *Against the self-images of the age*, that Marx and Engels treated two sets of questions as unproblematic, and which these two later schools illuminated (MacIntyre 1971b). The first set of questions, similarly to how we have seen from the Aristotelian perspective, concerned the nature of moral judgment—the meaning of 'good', 'right', 'justice' and so on. This was an important failure on the part of Marxism, suggests MacIntyre, because it has been 'precisely at the level of language that the moral inadequacies and corruptions of our age have been evident' (MacIntyre 1971b, p. 94). The second group of questions centered on explaining human action. If men were to break through the ideological barriers of obfuscation in society, they had to differentiate between that which they thought compelled them to act and that which actually compelled them to act. MacIntyre states:

> the empirical investigations of these questions cannot proceed successfully unless it is preceded and accompanied by a philosophical account of the relationship between the kind of explanation of human action in terms of intentions, reasons, and purposes which is native to human life itself and the kind of causal explanation which is familiar in the natural sciences. (MacIntyre 1971b, p. 94)

Ryle and Austin's ordinary language philosophy, with its care for 'rigor and for truth' had been overlooked by the Marxist tradition and could provide insight into such empirical investigations; yet this needed to be supplemented with the British idealist tradition, specifically Collingwood, who provided a historical dimension to philosophical investigation that is mostly missing from the analytic tradition. As Jason Blakely has recently drawn attention to, MacIntyre took from Wittgenstein the rejection of explanation that 'attempted to circumvent human intentions' (Blakely 2016, p. 47), along with the idea that the social sciences were interpretive, contextual and historical (Blakely 2016, p. 48). Blakely correctly points out that this links with the new left theme of reducing agency to 'impersonal strata of explanation' (Blakeley 2016, p. 48), expanding themes most notably developed in BTCOR. Although slightly digressive, these are nevertheless important problems that relate to the problem of informed desire. This is largely because the lack of philosophical rigor displayed by Marxism here (on MacIntyre's terms) feed into Marxism's practical concern—or lack of concern—with the concrete content of those concepts reflective of human action such as intentions, reasons and

purposes. For it is, on MacIntyre's interpretation, the failure to take seriously those specific intentions and purposes of working-class activity—such as the desire for alternative forms of social organization beyond socialism—that are closely related to, and informed by, Marxism's philosophical inadequacies and its consequent failure to take seriously the self-developed desires of the working class. MacIntyre's argument is that Marx and Marxists failed to develop and build on the Aristotelianism implicit in Marx's ToF (we will return to this theme); that Marxism, alone, fails to explain and understand human action adequately; furthermore, from Marx onwards, Marxists seemingly also rejected Hegel's insights into human action. Hegel's view here is that:

> each stage in the progress of rational agents is seen as a movement towards goals that are only articulated in the course of the movement itself. Human action is characteristically neither blind and goalless nor the mere implementation of means to an already decided end. Acting that is the bringing about of such an end by a calculated means certainly has a place, but a subordinate place, in human activity. (MacIntyre 2006b, p. 84)

MacIntyre is suggesting that Marxism's failure to address the problem of informed desire rests partly on an inadequate conception of human action that fails to pay sufficient attention to the desires, intentions and choices of the working class. This specific part of the problem is not only about the failings of Marxism in being unable to offer adequate reasons as to how and why people might come to actively desire socialism; rather, it is also Marxism's failure to take seriously the possibility that the end goal itself might be something qualitatively different from socialism.

The second detrimental consequence of Marxism's philosophical inadequacies in relation to the problem of informed desire is potentially even more serious. This is because, taken to its conclusion, MacIntyre claims that it highlights Marxism's overall political incongruence with late capitalist modernity. On MacIntyre's view, Marxism misdiagnoses the possibilities for developing the kind of revolutionary consciousness necessary to actively desire socialism, at least partially because it fails to understand the inherently Aristotelian form that such processes of resistance would have to take. The philosophical inadequacy of Marxism leads into a broader political inadequacy. How so? To answer this question we need to turn to MacIntyre's most significant post-Marxist work that specifically focuses on Marxism: *The Theses on Feuerbach: The Road Not Taken*

(MacIntyre 1994a). This essay contains some bold and not uncontroversial claims about both Marx and Aristotle, yet there is not room here to deal with all those controversies. They are also, as MacIntyre readily admits, not always fully substantiated. Therefore they must be, to a certain extent, unpacked and developed in some detail.

TToF: TRNT develops themes that first occupied MacIntyre, as we saw, in M: AI some four decades earlier. Most importantly, is the way that MacIntyre continues to separate the work of the early Marx from the later Marx; this separation, claims MacIntyre, is to the detriment of not only Marx but all those Marxists who followed him. It is a separation conceived somewhat differently here than it was in 1953. The focus in TToF: TRNT is not specifically Marx's move from prophecy to science even though it is very similar; rather, it is Marx's rejection of philosophy as the object of his enquiries, a rejection that would distort his later work. The claim by MacIntyre that there was a 'road not taken' by the Marx of 1843, when he wrote the ToF, is crucial to understanding the problem of informed desire and MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism. Marx's road not taken, suggests MacIntyre, is a road that pointed toward the discovery of the nature of revolutionary practice which, as it turns out for MacIntyre, is implicitly Aristotelian. Yet, unhappily, Marx himself abandoned his philosophical enquiries soon after, and with disastrous consequences for future Marxists (MacIntyre 1994a, pp. 224–225).

MacIntyre argues that Marx's ToF suggests that the standpoint of civil society cannot be understood, criticized or transcended by theory alone; rather 'only by a particular kind of practice, practice informed by a particular kind of theory rooted in that same practice' (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 225). Such practices are constituted by objective activity, that is, activity through which individuals, in making the 'end' of the practice their own, are able to achieve something of universal worth through their cooperation with other such individuals engaged in those practices. This kind of objective activity, argues MacIntyre, contrasts with those activities that are governed by the norms of civil society. This is because, from the standpoint of civil society, there is no conception of the common good that is not reducible to the goods pursued by individuals to satisfy their desires; contrastingly, the ends of a practice involving objective activity is 'characterizable antecedently and independently of any characterization of the desires' of the particular individuals who are engaged in that practice (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 225). This is an extremely important point. MacIntyre is arguing that it is through participation in such a practice,

and the discovery of both the goods internal and ends of that practice, that individuals simultaneously discover goods common and shared with other participants. Practices are transformative of desire; in the pursuit of the ends of those practices, participants undergo a transformation of their own desires as they acquire the skills and virtues that are necessary to achieve the goods of those practices. This is an inherently Aristotelian process, suggests MacIntyre.

Marx's ToF represents, for MacIntyre, a significant turning point, a crossroads in Marx's thought, despite his failure to press further the questions he raises (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xxxi). Marx, suggests MacIntyre, is beginning to understand that such objective activity—revolutionary practice—is best understood not in Hegelian but in Aristotelian terms. It is Aristotelianism that best expresses the idea that objective activity simultaneously transforms the desires of those participants, as they work toward the ends of that practice and develop the skills and virtues necessary to achieve both their ends and the ends of the practice. Marx rejected Hegel's view of pure theory as an 'instrument of social change' (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 226), he also rejected a conception of human activity through which the educator separated themselves from those to be educated, seeing themselves as being in possession of a theory that justified their superior position. It also justified the imposition of their conception of the good on those to be educated. This contrasted with a kind of activity that Marx pointed toward in the sixth Thesis and which, suggests MacIntyre, can only be properly understood in Aristotelian terms:

> those engaged in it transform themselves and educate themselves through their own self-transformative activity, coming to understand their good as the good internal to that activity. (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 231)

Marx, argues MacIntyre, was beginning to understand in the ToF the forms of life which embodied such a conception of revolutionary practice. He had experienced the militancy of the Silesian weavers of 1844 who provided a concrete example of revolutionary practice in that 'they had to reject what those who spoke and acted from the standpoint of civil society regarded as the economic and technological triumphs of the age' (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 233). Yet Marx viewed such forms of life as already-defeated in the wake of what he saw as the imminent, and pressing, large-scale revolutionary changes of an emerging industrial capitalism.

To spell out the insights of the ToF would be to detach Marx's theories from such changes and, on Marx's view suggests MacIntyre, leave him looking backwards, not forwards. As a result, Marx had to either abandon philosophy or deprive himself of participation in the coming revolutionary tumult, and he chose the former (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 232). Marx was therefore left in a situation where he failed to understand those forms of life through which militancy was fostered and so:

> failed to understand that while proletarianization makes it necessary for workers to resist, it also tends to deprive workers of those forms of practice through which they can discover conceptions of a good and of virtues adequate to the moral needs of resistance. (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 232)

This is an extremely significant criticism that feeds into a number of other assertions that MacIntyre makes about the nature of capitalism and the moral impoverishment of modernity. We will therefore have to return to it yet, for now, let us bring this back to the problem of informed desire. The argument that we have been developing suggests that, for MacIntyre, a crucial failing of Marxism is that it is deficient in understanding both the meaning, as well as the content—i.e. *how they might be realised*—of concepts such as 'good' and 'flourishing'. In its failure to attend to these, Marxism displays 'a lack of concern about philosophical truth' (MacIntyre 1971b, p. 93). We have seen how MacIntyre argues that Marxism fails to ask and answer the type of implicitly Aristotelian questions about how we should live and what the good life actually is. This is in no way to suggest that this is purely a theoretical error on Marxism's account. Part of the problem with Marxism, MacIntyre's critique suggests, is that it fails to grasp the nature and form of the practices through which such questions might be asked and answered and, consequently, the relationship between theory and practice as Marx was beginning to develop in the ToF.

This brings us back to MacIntyre's point in his 2011 essay when he states that NFTMW was 'doomed to failure' as we are now in a better position to understand why this is so. What Marxists failed to learn from the Theses—a mistake mirrored by MacIntyre's own Marxist position—was that the meaning and content of informed desire could not be theorized a priori. To begin with a conception of informed desire is incoherent; it is only through the pursuit of those goods internal to a practice that we might develop the kind of virtues necessary to become the kind

of people who might desire Marx's community of free individuals. As Lutz argues, for MacIntyre, Marx's 'road not taken' was his abandonment of the idea that revolutionary practice was something to be discovered in the practices of everyday life of certain communities, not something to be theorized, a priori, in terms of the direction and content of revolutionary activity (Lutz 2012, p. 79).

For MacIntyre, Marx's inattention to concepts such as good and flourishing reinforce Marxists' inability to understand that specific types of arena—practices—are required to create the conditions for debate—that is, practical reasoning—about the kinds of desires we should have. It seems, from MacIntyre's perspective, Callinicos's call for a 'space for reflection' about our desires repeats the Marxist mistake of failing to recognize that it is only within those Aristotelian-informed practices that the good life might be discovered. Social practices create the conditions necessary for developing informed desire. Individuals typically become 'moral human beings', as Knight argues, by 'subordinating their prior desires to the pursuit and production of goods that are external to the self but internal to social practices' (Knight 2007, p. 154). For MacIntyre, Marxism is defective in a double sense. It is defective in its 'conception of human goods' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 280), meaning that it fails to adequately characterize the good life beyond a future vision of socialism; secondly, Marxism is defective because it fails to ask the questions as to *how* one might become the type of human being—as well as *what type* of person one needs to become—who would actively desire the good life (MacIntyre 2016, p. 282). This inattention to good and flourishing forms part of the reason as to why MacIntyre has rejected Marxism for a Thomistic Aristotelianism; conversely, this process of self-discovery is *central* to Aquinas in that the ways which individuals develop their practical rationality constitutes part of what it means to be a Thomistic-Aristotelian (MacIntyre 1990b).

So far we have broadly discussed two of the three reasons which, together for MacIntyre, form the basis of what has been alternately called the problem of informed desire or the problem of justification. We have discussed what MacIntyre now sees as Marxism's inadequate understanding of the nature of revolutionary practice, of human agency, and its inattention to the implicitly Aristotelian ways that such informed desire might develop, together with the meaning and form of concepts such as good and flourishing and the relationship of theory to practice. The third of these reasons is, of course, closely related to the other two.

It also, in different ways, forms the basis of the rest of the critique that MacIntyre makes of Marxism in AV and beyond. I refer to MacIntyre's analysis of liberal capitalist modernity itself and his assertions concerning the place of Marxism and its potentialities within it.

The Moral Impoverishment of Modernity

We have begun to develop a discussion of what MacIntyre regards as Marxism's philosophical inadequacy in being unable to recognize that the problem of informed desire or justification needs an essentially Aristotelian solution. One might say that we have begun to lay the philosophical groundwork for the informed desire criticism. Yet that critique, in order to make sense, needs locating in MacIntyre's wider analysis of liberal modernity. Since MacIntyre left Marxism behind (at least in some ways) in the late 1960s, he has developed a much deeper, more complex, analysis of the nature and institutions of late modernity. To understand both what the informed desire critique and the 'moral impoverishment' critique of Marxism hinge on, we have to engage with that post-Marxist analysis of modernity.

The fourth criticism that MacIntyre makes of Marxism in AV reads as follows:

> Marxist socialism is at its core deeply optimistic. For however thoroughgoing its criticism of capitalist and bourgeois institutions may be, it is committed to asserting that within the society constituted by those institutions, all the human and material preconditions of a better future are being accumulated. Yet if the moral impoverishment of advanced capitalism is what so many Marxists agree that it is, whence are these resources for the future to be derived? (MacIntyre 2007, p. 262)

MacIntyre's question is essentially a rhetorical one. His view is that because of the moral impoverishment of modernity, Marxism is unable to develop those human and material preconditions for a better future that are necessary to bring about socialism. What MacIntyre is suggesting, most significantly, is not the fact that Marxists 'agree' on the moral impoverishment of advanced capitalism, it is that Marxists underestimate the extent of that moral impoverishment largely because of their various philosophical inadequacies. Consequently, the 'deeply optimistic' core of Marxism fails to recognize that those conditions of impoverishment

structurally prevent the development of socialism or indeed any kind of revolutionary transformation of society. The third and fifth criticisms of AV—that Marxists become Weberian and that they tend to create their own versions of the Übermensch—are testament to MacIntyre's understanding of modernity; they are both inadequate responses, yet they are, essentially, the only responses available from within the resources of Marxism. We will come to these other criticisms later; for now what is required is to understand what it is about advanced capitalism that leads MacIntyre to this conclusion.

We have seen how, in the 1960s, MacIntyre was becoming increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities for socialism. Of particular importance to this view was his analysis of what he saw as a self-consciously changed capitalism that could potentially manage crises out of existence (MacIntyre 1962a, 1963). Even if crises were still to occur, MacIntyre believed that an apathetic, docile working class and reformist trade unions were not conducive to the development of a revolutionary consciousness. MacIntyre would later deepen this critique of capitalism's 'moral impoverishment' by arguing that it deprived workers of those practices through which the virtues and a conception of the common good necessary to morally resist capitalism might develop (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 232). We have discussed how, for MacIntyre, the failure of Marxism to recognize this was rooted in Marx's own abandonment of philosophy. Marx had begun to recognize the implicitly Aristotelian nature of revolutionary practice in The ToF, yet he was blind to the fact that such forms of resistance were becoming increasingly 'socially marginalized' within the modern world (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 233). This is the basis for Marxism's inability to recognize its own inadequacy. It is inadequate in terms of how it conceives of revolutionary practice as well as in its analysis of capitalism and it is also inadequate as a political practice. As others have argued, the way that MacIntyre conceives of revolutionary practice is built on what he sees as both the inadequacy of Marxism as well as the key insights into the nature of resistance that the early Marx provides (Knight 2000, 2007).

Whether or not one accepts the thrust of MacIntyre's critique of Marxism here, it would be difficult to dispute the fact that MacIntyre has substantiated this critique much more thoroughly since he rejected Marxism in the 1960s. On his own admission, the period of his life until 1971, when he emigrated to the United States, was 'retrospectively, of heterogeneous, badly organized, sometimes fragmented and often

frustrating and messy enquiries' (MacIntyre 1991b, p. 268). This, I would suggest, underestimates MacIntyre's contributions in this period, yet there is nevertheless an element of truth here. The truth is that there was nothing before this period that was anything like as coherent as the project that MacIntyre has been developing at least from AV onwards. And if this is true about MacIntyre's Marxist attempt to develop a third moral position (despite the undoubted significance of the themes he was developing) then it is also true of his critique of Marxism in the 1960s. One cannot fully appreciate, let alone evaluate, the critique of Marxism unless one engages with the post-Marxist MacIntyre. Firstly, because the analysis of late modernity that lay the foundations for that critique is much more clearly developed in MacIntyre's post-Marxist period; secondly, because the revolutionary Aristotelianism that aims to not only build upon, but move beyond, Marxism is integral to understanding it. How, for MacIntyre, is modernity so morally impoverished?

One question that we have been formulating an answer to here is: How is it that, on MacIntyre's terms, Marxism fails to recognize the nature and extent of the moral impoverishment of advanced capitalism? Part of MacIntyre's answer to this question, as we have seen, is rooted in the problem of informed desire. Marxists are philosophically inattentive to how informed desire might develop and consequently misunderstand this process and underestimate the barriers to achieving it. To further understand why this is so, we need to return to the base—superstructure metaphor and show how MacIntyre interprets Marxists' understandings of this relationship and its consequences. This involves going back, most notably, to the 1968 reworking of M: AI, MaC.

MacIntyre argues that one of Marx's great achievements was his refusal to repeat the liberal mistake of separating economic from political from social man (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 135). The reification of religion, typified in ancient Greek societies or by sixteenth and seventeenth century Calvinists, had been replaced in classical bourgeois society by the reification of purely economic categories and Marx's achievement was in the demythologization of these so-called 'iron laws' of the economy. Unfortunately, argues MacIntyre, Marxists made the mistake of assuming that this demythologization had 'rid us of this kind of reification once and for all' (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 136). Marxists, therefore, fell victim to the same process of reification of Marx's thought that Liberals had done in relation to the separation of the political and the economic. MacIntyre argues that Marxists retained (as, for MacIntyre, all new categories of

thought do) traces of those old, liberal forms of thought, and this was manifested in the way that Marxist conceived of the base and superstructure relationship which was conceptualized in an 'external, contingent, causal relationship to each other … separate, and separately identifiable realms' (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 137).

The philosophical consequences of this reification of Marx's thought dictated that what was meant only as Marx's analysis of the specific nature of the relationship between the political and the economic spheres in classical bourgeois society was then essentially universalized to be applicable to all forms of bourgeois or capitalist society. The practical consequence of this was that Marxism was transformed into an essentially conservative ideology. Marxism, argues MacIntyre, was unable to explain or comprehend these newly emerging social forms which were qualitatively different from those of classical capitalism. It was the fact that Marxists 'have been unable to be sufficiently self-critical of their own conceptual schemes' that those same schemes were now inapplicable to an understanding of the great changes that contemporary capitalism has undergone (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 139). The reification of Marxian concepts had become intrinsic to Marxism and therefore it had retained, in essence, the very methodological faults that it had once realized was the crucial lacuna in liberalism. The failure of Marxists to be self-critical, instead reifying those Marxian assertions concerning the political and the economic that were meant for a situation entirely different to modern capital, meant that, crucially, this had fundamentally 'weakened understanding of the bureaucratic neocapitalism of the West' (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 139).

This misunderstanding was based on the deterministic interpretation of the base and superstructure relationship and which informs the critique of Marxism contained within TToF: TRNT (Blackledge 2008, p. 215). The deterministic conception of the relationship between the base and the superstructure meant that both the ethical dimension of working-class activity and the nature of those practices that could best resist the standpoint of civil society were left philosophically unexplored. Consequently, Marx and other Marxists failed to develop the Aristotelianism implicit within the ToF and its notion of revolutionary practice. And because of this failure, they could not understand that the break with the standpoint of civil society that the ToF envisaged was only possible from within a certain type of Aristotelian—informed practice that was 'socially marginalized' within modern capitalism (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 233). More broadly, MacIntyre is suggesting

that the consequence of this reification was that Marxists were essentially blinded to the way that modern capitalism, its politics and its institutions structurally prevent the development of the necessary conditions for socialism. It therefore becomes important to initially examine what it is about advanced capitalism, on MacIntyre's terms, that structurally prevents the development of the kind of revolutionary resistance envisaged by Marxists.

Marx took from Hegel, noted MacIntyre in 1959 (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 96), an understanding of specifically human activity as rational self-determination. What makes human beings human is their ability to set themselves goals and purposes and to carry these out in a rational way. A precondition of becoming a rational, moral agent, on both the Hegelian Marxist and Thomistic-Aristotelian terms, is this conception of what can be characterized as moral agency. MacIntyre has recently argued that such moral agency is characterized by shared deliberation over ends, and that those ends are the ends of those involved in that activity, not the ends of 'external managerial control' (MacIntyre 2016, pp. 170–171). The moral life is that of rational agents, in cooperation with others, pursuing the 'goods of their relationships, in activity and conversation' (MacIntyre 1994b, p. 360). Typically though, such instances of moral agency are marginalized within advanced modernity. Work is characterized in late modernity by the pursuit of ends that are forced upon workers by administrators and managers (MacIntyre 2016, p. 131). More broadly, this is reflective of a dominant culture that is 'deeply incompatible' with the kind of rational enquiry and discussion needed to develop an alternative form of political and social order (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 223).

This is what MacIntyre takes to be one of the key strengths of Aristotelianism—the ability to recognize that the development of rationally adequate practical and moral concepts requires a particular type of social order in which to embody such a conception of moral agency and practical rationality (MacIntyre 1992, p. 111). Yet not only is late modernity not such an order, it is also not the kind of order which provides the conditions in which one might even envisage an alternative kind of order. MacIntyre suggests that these 'conditions' of moral impoverishment manifest themselves in at least two ways. Firstly, in creating desires opposed to those desires that 'agents qua rational agents' would have (MacIntyre 2016, p. 109), secondly, in denying access to those types of institutional arenas through which it might become possible to develop or change those desires. MacIntyre argues that within

late modernity desires are 'multifarious and heterogeneous' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 132). Late capitalism, of course, is a consumer society that creates conceptions of desires that rational agents would have no good reason to desire. Desire is typically misdirected so that, for those within such a society, 'what they want is too often what they have no good reason to want' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 108).

In Marxist terminology, late capitalism is characterized by estrangement from what MacIntyre would call 'informed' desire. To apply Marx's ideas from the *1844 Manuscripts*, desire has become estranged in that it has come 'under the sway' of the 'inhuman power' of a late capitalist, consumerist society. Desire, understood in this way, is characterized by 'ceaseless, unproductive consumption'. The realization, the telos, of the kind of life this provides is characterized not in terms of rational activity directed toward a common good, but only in immediate terms of self-gratification, further excesses and other such 'capricious, bizarre notions' (Marx 1988, p. 125). It is this kind of society, suggests MacIntyre, which reverses the Thomist and Aristotelian understanding of pleonexia (acquisitiveness) as a vice and turns it into a virtue (Marx 1988, p. 109). MacIntyre remains in agreement with Aristotle and Aquinas, and also Marx here, when he argues that in such societies money becomes an object of desire for its own sake (MacIntyre 2016, p. 109). As the young Marx argued, money becomes the only and true need within such an economic system and what were previously seen as the vices of excess and intemperance become the 'true norm' within such a system (Marx 1988, p. 116). MacIntyre, therefore, continues to understand the nature of the capitalist system, certainly through both Aquinas and Aristotle, nevertheless still deeply influenced and informed by Marx's critique of capitalism (MacIntyre 2016, p. 110).

The situation that we find ourselves in within late modernity is that, typically, we are unable to think about modernity except in its own terms (MacIntyre 2016). This is largely because there is no 'institutional arena' within which 'plain persons' can engage in the kind of 'systematic reasoned debate' through which it might become possible to envisage some such alternative and potentially give political expression to some such alternative (MacIntyre 1995c, p. 185). Late liberal modernity privatizes conceptions of the good, defining morality independently of the common good. Moral questions consequently appear as a 'grab bag of separable, isolable and so insoluble problems' (MacIntyre 1990b, p. 354). The institutions of late modernity therefore give 'concrete and particularized

expression' to this present condition of liberalism, preventing the development of the kind of 'shared possession of a rationally justifiable conception of human good' which is a necessary precondition to a rationally founded, coherent moral alternative (MacIntyre 1990b, p. 351). On MacIntyre's view, liberal society involves the institutionalization of the tradition of individual preference. In such conditions, it becomes natural to equate the 'human self with the liberal self' (MacIntyre 1988, p. 337), to assume the role of what the contemporary MacIntyre calls 'autonomous preference maximizers' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 173), and to reject the possibility of seeing any kind of unity to human life or any conception of the common good which is not ultimately reducible to individual goods.

The moral impoverishment of late modernity is characterized by the stripping away of the conditions and the mode of self-understanding that is required to become what MacIntyre calls a moral agent or, at the very least, of providing a serious threat to the possibility of becoming a moral agent. MacIntyre state there are three characteristics necessary to understanding oneself as a moral agent: 'accountability to particular others, participation in critical practical enquiry, and acknowledgment of the individuality both of others and of oneself' (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 192). If those conditions through which it is possible to become a moral agent are not present, moral agency would be seriously diminished and one would be unable to transcend the limitations of the social and cultural order that one inhabits (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 192). MacIntyre suggests that the 'question therefore is: are there or might there be types of social structure that would prevent those who inhabited them from understanding themselves as moral agents?' (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 189) MacIntyre's answer to this question concentrates on such social structures and their effects, the modern state, market and the 'peculiarly modern phenomenon' of compartmentalization (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 196).

MacIntyre has always held the view, in opposition to liberalism, that the state is not, nor cannot be, neutral between competing classes. Any thought to the contrary is, on MacIntyre's as well as Marx's view, 'pure and obvious error' (MacIntyre 1963, p. 282). MacIntyre's conception of the state has always had a degree of nuance beyond a purely instrumentalist view. In his Marxist period in the early 1960s he understood the contemporary state as being in some respects 'at least semi-autonomous', more complex and less unitary than the old

state. This unity had dissipated into a 'multifarious network of institutions', with an increasing bureaucracy and a decreasing accessibility to what MacIntyre called traditional forms of political activity (MacIntyre 1961, pp. 192, 194). Nevertheless, the state, argued MacIntyre in 1963, was so well integrated into the capitalist system that it could no longer be conceived of as a 'neutral, independent source of power' against the capitalist economy (MacIntyre 1963, p. 284).

MacIntyre's contemporary analysis of the state is much more developed in terms of understanding what he characterizes as the destructive effects of the state and his more strenuous opposition to it. MacIntyre's view of the state is fundamental to his analysis of modernity and his contemporary politics. Indeed, MacIntyre's politics is perhaps best understood as being oppositional to the state and attempting to find some kind of alternative to it (Murphy 2003c, p. 152). MacIntyre's contemporary view of the state leads to the conclusion that those who make their aim the conquest of state power are themselves always conquered by it (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xv). This remains a key difference between the Marxist and the contemporary MacIntyre, in that he now believes he was fundamentally mistaken, in the 1950s, in taking 'for granted' the institutional forms of state power. MacIntyre's suggestion is that, because Marxism has the conquest of state power as its aim, and because it misunderstands and underestimates the nature of the state, Marxism ends up becoming an instrument 'of one of the several versions of modern capitalism' (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xv). This is the key reason why MacIntyre now advocates a political of local community, a politics of 'self-defence, as far removed as possible from the 'insidious and destructive' pressures of the state and capitalism (MacIntyre 1995a, p. xxxi).

This critique is one that we will also turn to later when we focus on Marxists' 'move towards power' and the nature and form of that move. Yet it is also important to our discussion here. This is because Marxists' failure to understand the nature and role of the state, along with other key features of late modernity, provide an explanation as to why Marxist fail on the problem of informed desire and in their assessment of the moral impoverishment of modernity; for it is precisely the nature of the state and modern social life that structurally prevent the kind of moral agency through which revolutionary practice might develop.

MacIntyre gives the following definition of the state:

> The modern state is a large, complex and often ramshackle set of interlocking institutions, combining none too coherently the ethos of a public utility company with inflated claims to embody ideals of liberty and justice. Politics is the sphere in which the relationship of the state's subjects to the various facets of the state's activity is organized, so that the activities of those subjects do not in any fundamental way disrupt or subvert that relationship … Conventional politics sets limits to practical possibility, limits that are characteristically presupposed by its mode of discourse, rather than explicitly articulated. (MacIntyre 1997, p. 236)

One of the most damaging aspects of the nature of the modern state is that it prevents its citizens from accessing the kind of shared practical reasoning that is required to form any kind of alternative political community (Knight 2007, p. 170), such as that based around an agreed conception of the common good. The state's decision-making procedures are isolated from rational enquiry and, furthermore, those decision-making procedures proceed hierarchically. Both of these factors fail to fulfill the kind of Aristotelian conception of practical reasoning necessary to develop such a conception of the common good (Murphy 2003c, pp. 159–160). Practical reasoning is both means and ends, and the modern state fails on both accounts. The state is fundamental in denying the conditions, on MacIntyre's terms, through which individuals might be able to become the kind of practical, moral agents that could transcend these conditions of moral impoverishment.

It is not only in the denial of practical reasoning where the state fails. In tandem with the market, the state embodies values that are generally incompatible with the values of any kind of alternative form of local community. The modern state and market are characterized by 'flexibility and compromise' in that principles can be exchanged, bartered and compromised. The politics of local community conceived in Aristotelian terms is characterized by goods and principles that cannot be traded off under any circumstances. Whereas flexibility and compromise are virtues in the modern state and market, it is moral intransigence that is a virtue in the politics of local community (MacIntyre 1999b, p. 213). The modern state and the market work in tandem, each presenting themselves as custodians of society's values: 'the state as the guardian of the nation's ideals and the caretaker of its heritage, and the market as the institutionalized expression of its liberties' (MacIntyre 1999b, p. 213).

Both the size and the complexity of the State, conceived in such a way, ensure a specific formulation and understanding of politics. In modern society, politics is characterized by MacIntyre as essentially 'unphilosophical'. What MacIntyre means by this is that those wider (Aristotelian) philosophical questions that articulate rival conceptions of the good—rival meaning incompatible—are excluded from the sphere of politics and political debate within modern, compartmentalized societies. The state, on this view, is one of the key embodiments of the Enlightenment and poses 'the most serious threat to reasoned understanding of our time' (Hind quoted in McMylor 2011, p. 131). Philosophy also suffers the same compartmentalized fate. Philosophers primarily address philosophers thus severely limiting the scope and effectiveness of any philosophical enquiry into rival conceptions of the common good (MacIntyre 1997, p. 236). As in the materialist critique that Marx outlined in the ToF, philosophy has become divorced from practice and practice has become divorced from philosophy. This fissure between theory and practice that is characteristic of modernity excludes rival conceptions of the good from being considered by the vast majority of citizens within such modern societies. Politics, understood in such a way, has become essentially un-political. This means that it is both closed off to the vast majority of the population and it has the kind of tenuous relationship with philosophy that prevents the formulation of philosophical questions that could articulate a rival conception of the good to that of the standpoint of civil society. Modern society is necessarily fragmented in that a conception of the virtues, of the moral decision-making process, only exists in relation to a particular, compartmentalized social role which bears little or no relation to other roles within society.

MacIntyre suggests that the precepts of the virtues come to be understood as 'prescriptions for habit-formation in the interests of achieving effectiveness in this or that particular role' (MacIntyre 1992, p. 117). This is the specifically modern phenomenon of compartmentalization and it is inseparable from modern society. Keith Breen has argued that MacIntyre takes his theory of Compartmentalization from Weber's theory of 'polytheistic disenchantment' which argues that the cultural, political, scientific and economic spheres of human life have become mutually estranged from one another (Breen 2005, p. 486). The institutionalization of compartmentalization means that the nature of the different moral and social roles that are achievable are, to a large extent, predetermined and limited

by this compartmentalization (MacIntyre 1992, p. 117). A conception of the common good that is opposed to the necessarily individualized standpoint of civil society is unachievable through the institutions of such a society as it would require, in order articulating a rival conception of the common good, a conception of the role of both politics and philosophy that is incompatible with the institutionalized standpoint of civil society. MacIntyre states that:

> It is only within the limitations and under the constraints imposed by the professionalization of procedures and the compartmentalization of role-structured activity that situations are described and alternative solutions propounded. (MacIntyre 1992, p. 118)

For MacIntyre, the function of modern institutions and the modern state is such that they structurally prevent radically competing conceptions of the good as they deny the fundamental political and philosophical requirements that would be required in order to articulate such a conception of the good. Politics as a necessarily limited and limiting practice and philosophy as an isolated and politically-impotent discipline are the precise opposites of the type of conditions in which a rival conception of the common good could be fostered. Questions concerning what the common good of a community are can only be answered by elaborating on 'a conception of the common good of a kind of community in which each individual's achievement of his or her own good is inseparable both from achieving the shared goods of practices and from contributing to the common good of the community as a whole' (MacIntyre 1997, pp. 240–241). And it is only from within practices that incorporate this implicitly Aristotelian notion, as conceptualized by MacIntyre, that it can become possible to resist the degenerative effects of the state and its institutions and the compartmentalized standpoint of modern society.

A key difference between advanced modernity and other cultures, suggests MacIntyre, is the 'degree and nature of its compartmentalizations' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 237). MacIntyre states that 'each distinct sphere of social activity comes to have its own role structure governed by its own specific norms in relative independence of other such spheres' (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 197). Compartmentalization means that people cannot effectively assume the position of a moral agent, as such an agent requires practically rational individuals. This inability to draw together different aspects of social life is, as McMylor has noted, one of the crucial

aspects of the modern social order and an important part of MacIntyre's mature position (McMylor 2011, p. 126). Such practically rational individuals are not generally compatible with a society where moral decisions are made only in relation to certain specific roles (father, customer, employer etc.). All we can do is move from one role to another without externalizing ourselves from those particular roles and making decisions as an individual rather than from the context of a particular social role. MacIntyre argues that one of the problematic consequences of compartmentalization is that it exempts the individual within a specific social role from considering those responsibilities that he readily considers only in another social role (MacIntyre 1977, p. 229).

What cannot be provided in modern society is an understanding of one's self 'as having a substantive identity independent of their roles' (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 199). This means we generally cannot possess the required practical reasoning which enables us to set themselves apart from our roles, whichever they may be. As a consequence of this, quite different ethical decisions can be made by the same person from a different role—chief executive of a power company or as a father—and each is incommensurable with the other. Cutting emissions and being greener is logical from one position but generally absurd from another and there is no objective standard from which it becomes possible to measure moral decisions. Indeed, many people cannot conceive of themselves as having a potential existence that is external to the social roles that they fulfill. These compartmentalized groups cannot be thought of as practices, as they do not share common conceptions of internal good and virtues from which to form moral judgments. The moral impoverishment of capitalism is such precisely because we are prevented, argues MacIntyre, from becoming the type of rational, moral agents who could begin to question the very rationality of modern capitalism itself.

Through discussing the problem of informed desire and the moral impoverishment criticisms of Marxism we have, essentially, made two overall claims. One of these claims is that MacIntyre suggests that the conditions of late modernity are far from conducive to the development of rational, moral agency and revolutionary practice. This analysis of late modernity is far from complete. As we move through the rest of MacIntyre's critique of Marxism, key ideas about bureaucratic rationality, expertise and the inadequate moral reasoning embodied within social life will be developed much more. MacIntyre's other claim is that Marxism fails to recognize the nature of these conditions and that it also

fails to recognize its own inadequacies, both philosophical and political. MacIntyre's contemporary claim is that it is only some form of reconstructed Aristotelianism that might potentially resist the morally corrosive and politically barren landscape of modernity (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xxvii). Modern politics, the modern state and compartmentalization all contribute to this landscape, yet Marxism fails to recognize both the extent of this impoverishment and the inadequacies of its own political solutions. The good of the liberal order is the sovereignty of individual preferences. What this means, in practical terms, in politics and society and economics, is the institutionalization of power held by those who are able to determine which preferences we are able to choose between (MacIntyre 1988, p. 345). It is clear that these claims, to an extent, represent a shift, if not a reversal, in MacIntyre's assessment and understanding of Marxism since the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nevertheless, if MacIntyre's contemporary claim is that Marxism fails to break from the standpoint of modernity in various ways, it is important to discuss the theory and practice of various Marxists who have tried to do precisely that.

Marx and Nietzsche

We have up to this point examined two criticisms of Marxism that together contribute to MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism. The problem of informed desire, in a morally impoverished modernity, goes some way to explaining Marxism's philosophical failings and its inability to develop Marx's conception of revolutionary practice and MacIntyre's moral agency. The third criticism of Marxism in AV, discussed below, is MacIntyre's view on how Marxists respond to this morally impoverished situation. While Marxism tries to claim a distinctive moral standpoint, in effect, it finds itself no more able to escape the moral wilderness than the liberalism it purports to reject. This is evidenced in the inadequacies of even its finest exponents:

> … if the moral impoverishment of advanced capitalism is what so many Marxists agree that it is, whence are these resources for the future to be derived? It is not surprising that at this point Marxism tends to produce its own versions of the Übermensch: Lukács' ideal proletarian, Leninism's ideal revolutionary. When Marxism does not become Weberian social democracy or crude tyranny, it tends to become Nietzschean fantasy. (MacIntyre 2007, p. 262)

To understand MacIntyre's critique of Marxism here we need to provide some context by discussing the foundations of this critique. Primarily, we need to understand what MacIntyre means by 'Nietzschean fantasy' before examining how he transfers the critique of Nietzsche to Marxism generally, and Lukács and Lenin specifically. This involves going back, initially, to 1966s ASHOE and tracing a path through to AV and beyond. It will then be possible to see how MacIntyre's association of Marxism with what he calls Weberianism (the final criticism of Marxism we will discuss) extends from the premises that MacIntyre develops here.

MacIntyre concluded ASHOE by stating that without some conception of the virtues and some alternative moral and social practice to the moral emptiness characterized by Nietzsche, we are 'doomed to social solipsism' (MacIntyre 1991a, p. 268). This conclusion suggested that while MacIntyre was in general agreement with Nietzsche's characterization of Enlightenment morality he was unable to wholly accept that there could not be some 'cultivation of the virtues' which could potentially provide a coherent moral challenge to Nietzsche's arguments (MacIntyre 1991a, p. 268). Commenting on this, MacIntyre has more recently suggested that because at that time he was unable to comprehend a moral theory such as this, then it would have been more proper to give 'Nietzsche the final word' (MacIntyre 1991b, p. 268). This is because, argues MacIntyre, 'choosing one's own morality makes no sense' whereas what does make sense—at least in the context of the diagnosis of modern morality—is the much more radical, Nietzschean notion of 'choosing to displace and overcome such morality' (MacIntyre 1991b, p. 261); although not in agreement with Nietzsche's characterization of all morality as the 'will to power', nevertheless, at this stage, MacIntyre was unable to provide a coherent moral alternative.

MacIntyre sees much value in Nietzsche and, together with Weber, he sees these two figures as providing the key theoretical articulations of the contemporary social order (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 114–115). Nietzsche's greatness, for MacIntyre, lies in his diagnosis of the modern moral condition. MacIntyre argues that from within the moral wilderness of morality, those that try to think through their moral foundations will find something very much like the Nietzschean 'will to power' at the core of those foundations. That is, on Nietzschean terms, it is to discover a moral system characterized essentially by 'suppressions and repressions' (MacIntyre 1990a, p. 35). MacIntyre agrees with Nietzsche that there is a 'systematic discrepancy' between the purported meanings of moral

concepts, with their claims to represent neutral conceptions of the good, and their actual meaning as expressions of specific interests and personal preferences (MacIntyre 1992, p. 109). Morality, conceived in this way, is a mask that conceals the real expressions of power behind morality itself. While those representative of the dominant emotivist culture see this as no reason to abandon their moral frameworks, Nietzscheans and post-Nietzscheans consequently view morality as something to be abandoned, to be transcended.

Yet, while MacIntyre sides with, as Garcia puts it, the Nietzschean 'masters of suspicion' on their claims about the nature and role of ideological moral values, he never outright rejects the possibility of genuine moral rationality and consensus (Garcia 2003, p. 101). MacIntyre agrees that Nietzsche's view of modern morality is indeed representative of how our social relations are institutionalized within modern capitalism, yet he rejects the view that all social relations are no more than 'relations of manipulation' (Knight 2007, pp. 125–126). MacIntyre conceives of Nietzsche as generalizing the condition of morality in his present day to the condition of morality as such (MacIntyre 2007, p. 113). MacIntyre's critique of Nietzsche is essentially two-fold. Firstly, in failing to recognize the specificity of the moral condition he diagnoses and, secondly, in the 'frivolous' solutions that he puts forth in the form of the Übermensch (MacIntyre 2007, p. 114).

Nevertheless, from within the resources of modernity, MacIntyre argues that the Nietzschean characterization is correct. Modern liberal morality—and by extension Marxism—precisely because they are developed and formed within modernity, are indelibly marked with those institutionalized social relations of manipulation and moral incoherence. One significant point that differentiates MacIntyre's critique of the ethical content of Marxism from many others is that it stems from a much wider, fundamental critique of all modern, post-Enlightenment theories. At the heart of this critique is the assertion that all attempts to formulate a coherent moral theory from within the 'standpoint of civil society' are nothing other than more or less sophisticated articulations of personal preference (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 232). This is a consequence of the incoherent and fragmented moral schemes of modernity that began with the expulsion of those teleological conceptions of morality that once gave meaning to those schemes (MacIntyre 2007, p. 62). This is why any attempt at justifying morality within modernity can find no basis that is not in some way rooted in either utilitarian or abstract,

Kantian appeals to duty or rights that have been detached from those moral schemes that once gave them meaning. And it is precisely because such Kantian morality is rooted in nothing more than an expression of personal preference that Nietzsche's view of morality as being a disguise for the 'will to power' is vindicated in relation to modern moral theories including now, of course, Marxism. MacIntyre's contemporary view is that if a 'premodern view of morals and politics is to be vindicated against modernity, it will be in something like Aristotelian terms or not at all' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 118).

MacIntyre's general argument is that there are but two choices within modernity—a continuation of those Enlightenment projects which necessarily leads one to a Nietzschean solution in the form of the 'Übermensch'; or alternatively, an outright rejection of the Enlightenment project —'there is no third alternative' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 118). The flipside to Kantian incoherence is Nietzsche's will to power and there is no way to transcend the individualized standpoint of civil society that does not reproduce one of these positions. MacIntyre's specific claim against Marxism here is that, in attempting to continue such incoherent enlightenment projects (as MacIntyre characterizes Marxism), Marxists reproduce their own versions of the Nietzschean attempt to transcend such incoherence—the Übermensch. On MacIntyre's terms, his assessment of modernity is vindicated by the theory and practice of Marxism, even in the form of its most proficient exponents, reproducing the socially-institutionalized moral frameworks of modernity. The search for the 'third moral position' of NFTMW has long been abandoned.

MacIntyre is arguing that Marxism, in practice, reproduces the forms of what has been called 'active nihilism'. Simon Critchley has defined nihilism as a 'declaration of meaninglessness, a sense of indifference, directionless or, at its worst, despair that can flood into all areas of life' (Critchley 2007, p. 3). This sense of meaninglessness can provoke two opposing responses—what Critchley characterizes as passive and active nihilism. The passive nihilist accepts the meaninglessness of the world and essentially retreats from it into an engagement with those activities through which he can continue to perfect himself. The active nihilist also finds the world meaningless, yet 'instead of sitting back and contemplating, he tries to destroy this world and bring another into being' (Critchley 2007, pp. 4–5). For MacIntyre, the actions of the active nihilist are essentially a necessary consequence of any attempt to build on the Enlightenment project of justifying morality.

As we have seen, any attempt to find objectivity and moral meaning within modernity is, for MacIntyre, a chimera; because the language of morality 'passed from a state of order to disorder', any sustained attempt to give meaning and coherence to moral actions from within the confines of modernity must fail (MacIntyre 2007, p. 11). Marxism, MacIntyre now argues, attempts to reach what is an impossible position in its doomed attempt to make sense of and transcend these nihilistic conditions. The Marxist, like the nihilist, necessarily assumes an external relationship to the world, finding no meaning within it and perceiving it as an alien object. This is the critique of nihilists that MacIntyre made in 1962 (and later extended to those such as Lukács and Lenin) when he stated that 'they thought they could erupt into history, as it were from the outside, and storm it by violence' (MacIntyre 1962c, p. 206). Yet MacIntyre's contemporary view represents a reversal of his position regarding Marxism in 1962. Here, his argument was that nihilists were at their 'furthest remove' from Marxism, while the contemporary MacIntyre suggests any kind of attempt to change the world, including from within Marxism, reproduces the structure and form of Nietzschean nihilism.

This is, from MacIntyre's contemporary perspective, an entirely logical reversal of the position he held in the late 1950s and early 1960s. MacIntyre has fundamentally changed his assessment of both the nature of modernity and Marxism's ability to interpret, indeed change, those conditions of modernity. What needs to be done now is to examine more closely those 'Nietzschean fantasies', typified in Lukács and Lenin, to understand how this critique applies specifically to Marxism.

A significant essay here is 1973s *Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution*. This is an important precursor to AV in that it develops a number of arguments about the expert, the manager and the social scientist which will all come into prominence when we examine the Weberian critique of Marxism. What is initially significant about this essay is that it provides an insight into how MacIntyre characterizes the Marxist revolutionary in his post-Marxist period. Again, here we see MacIntyre generalizing a critique of specific forms of Marxism to Marxism as such. MacIntyre's argument is that the Marxist revolutionary—in any form—reproduces the irrationalities of the orthodox social scientist and ends up inhabiting the same ideological structures as his opponent (MacIntyre 1973, p. 342). What MacIntyre means by this is

that Marxists end up subsuming the rational—i.e. refutable—core of their theory to the ultimately irrational predictive aspect of their theory. In Popperian terms, irrationality is defined by the jettisoning of refutability. Precisely because they are revolutionaries, Marxists are unwilling or unable to recognize the inapplicability of their theories, or aspects of it, as this would mean recognizing their own inapplicability to revolution. As we have seen, this is very similar to the argument MacIntyre makes against Marx in TTOF:TRNT, as well as in MaC. What it provides in relation to the Übermensch criticism of Marxism, is an insight into why, on MacIntyre's terms, Marxists ignore, refuse or are incapable of recognizing both their theoretical inadequacies and their consequent reproduction of the social relations of manipulation that characterize modernity.

MacIntyre's critique of Marxism in this area is rooted in two assumptions that we have previously discussed. Firstly, that the moral impoverishment of modernity is such that it tends to prevent the development of moral agency and a conception of informed desire through which individuals might break with the standpoint of civil society. Secondly, due to their philosophical inadequacies and political urgency, Marxists have generally been unable or unwilling to understand the nature and extent of this moral impoverishment. For MacIntyre, both Lenin and Lukács theoretical articulations of the Nietzschean Übermensch are representative of Marxist attempts to respond to an increasingly and insurmountably barren modern, moral landscape.

The general thrust of MacIntyre's argument to be explored here is that both Lukácsian and Leninist versions of Marxism are forced into placing an unsupportable weight of revolutionary activity onto, respectively, the working class and the revolutionary party. This critique develops from both Lenin's and Lukács' philosophical inadequacies yet, more broadly, it applies practically to any Marxist attempt to break from the standpoint of civil society. MacIntyre does not exclude the possibility that some form of nominally-Marxist revolutionary organization cannot (nor of course, has not) achieved political success. Yet what he does exclude, contemporarily, is the possibility that the form which such activity might take cannot but reproduce in their practice the inadequate moral frameworks, either in the broad form of Kantianism or Utilitarianism, and those relations of manipulation that characterize modernity.

We can trace the beginnings of this criticism of Marxism in MacIntyre's work back to 1953. In 1968s MaC, MacIntyre argues that in attempting to solve the problem of the revolutionary transition to socialism Marxists tended to assume one of two inadequate positions. Either they placed their faith in the Kautskyian objective march of history or they placed it in the Lukácsian defense of Leninist politics. This amounted to a deification of, respectively, history or the party (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 101). What MacIntyre means by deification here is, again in the Popperian sense, that Marxism became unfalsifiable. When Marxist pronouncements and beliefs conflict with evidence, deification necessitates that it is the evidence that must be 'explained away', rather than the theory itself rejected (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 113). Faced with the gap between revolutionary theory and un-revolutionary reality, Marxism became an unquestioned, authoritative dogma; increasingly bearing less and less relation to empirical reality. With this act of blind faith, Marxists had re-mystified Marxism, reversing Marx's demystification of Hegel and reincorporating the 'metaphysical fictions' which both Feuerbach and Marx had criticized in Hegel (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 102). While MacIntyre had argued as far back as 1953 that there was a tendency within certain forms of Marxism to treat its doctrines as unfalsifiable and deviations from it as heresy (MacIntyre 1953, p. 101); the critique of Marxism in AV represents a development of the argument in 1968s MaC, which is itself an extension of this argument to all forms of Marxism.

MacIntyre argued that an increasingly unfalsifiable Marxism was therefore forced into a series of auxiliary responses as the gap between Marxist theory and empirical, un-revolutionary reality became ever wider. This, as we saw earlier, was an argument developed in 1969s *Marxism of the Will* (an essay published, of course, after MacIntyre had rejected Marxism, left IS, and 'ceased' to be a Marxist). Here, the subject-matter was Che Guevara yet, on MacIntyre's terms, Guevara is now representative of Marxism's failures much more widely and was indeed repeating the voluntarist aspects of Lenin himself (MacIntyre 1969, p. 377). We are primarily concerned here with the charge of voluntarism that MacIntyre brings to Guevara and also Lenin and Lukács. MacIntyre argues that Marxism becomes voluntarism in an attempt to bridge the gap between objective conditions and revolutionary activity. Voluntarism is an 'appeal to pure will' in order to 'transcend' such objective conditions and fill the gap between these conditions and the revolutionary

cause. Guevara was forced to appeal to the Kantian invocation of duty, repeating the errors of Bernstein and Liebknecht, in an act of doomed 'moral heroism' that ultimately failed to find any coherent moral foundations for socialism. The other choice would have been a crude utilitarian appeal to self-interest, argues MacIntyre. The argument suggests, on MacIntyre's terms, that Marxism, as evidenced in the practical responses of even those most admirable and erudite of Marxists, is unable to find the third moral position that MacIntyre once thought it might.

MacIntyre remains, in some ways, a great admirer of Lukács work, particularly the Lukács of HCC. For example, in 2009 MacIntyre continued to argue that HCC was a 'brilliant interpretation of Marx', and that Lukács, in moving beyond the inadequacies of the Second International had remade Marxism as a philosophical force to be reckoned with (MacIntyre 2009, pp. 171–172). Yet MacIntyre nevertheless still sees in Lukács a representative of a typically inadequate response to the moral impoverishment of modernity. What is the interpretation of Lukács that MacIntyre holds to?

There is an immediate, and for some fatal, difficulty that must be acknowledged when evaluating Lukács. It is one that MacIntyre himself has discussed on several occasions. Lukács himself came to reject his own masterwork HCC, or at least reject a great deal of it. MacIntyre called this Lukács' 'un-Marxist' attempt to separate his present from his past (MacIntyre 1965a, p. 318). However, a good deal of that rejection, Lukács would later point out, was predicated on the view that it was an 'entry ticket' to participation in the revolutionary struggle against Fascism (Lukács 1967, p. xxx). Even after the dust had settled from his notorious Stalinist capitulation and self-criticism of the 1930s, some thirty years later, Lukács would still reject what he called in 1967 the 'messianic utopianism' of HCC (Lukács 1967, p. xxv). Indeed, in 1965 MacIntyre suggested that Lukács broke with his own, earlier position in HCC and ended up inhabiting the same social world as the Stalinist whom he had originally opposed. The later Lukács represented an 'extreme and tragic' example of what happens when there are 'no longer questions about the ends of life, but only unquestioned and unquestioning answers' (MacIntyre 2006d, pp. 138–139). Lukács' 'impatience with history' meant that he came to mirror the revolutionary that MacIntyre characterized in 1973, therefore inhabiting the same social structures,

the same 'subintellectual world' that he had once criticized (MacIntyre 1965a, p. 326). What makes this problem all the more difficult to dismiss, is that it has been interpreted, not simply as an aberration, but as a result of the practical, indeed logical, implementation of Lukács own theory. On MacIntyre's contemporary view, Lukács did indeed hold a messianic view of the working class.

Lukács, argues MacIntyre, substituted a Kierkegaardian faith in God for a faith in a utopian future. One consequence of this faith was a willingness to sacrifice previously and unquestioningly prohibited moral absolutes to an ethics of duty to the party (MacIntyre 2009, p. 159). Lukács response to the contradiction of his own ethical aversion to Bolshevism and the pressing need for a socialist future was only resolved by joining the Communist party and, eventually, subsuming questions of ethics into the concrete form of that Communist Party. As MacIntyre had argued much earlier, Lukács deification of the party, the unfalsifiable representation of the revolutionary subject, demanded an eventual recantation of anything that contradicted that party, including Lukács own work. The capitulation to Stalinism resulted from the implementation of Lukács own method, meaning that Lukács 'vindicated his philosophical work in his life' (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 163). In doing so, Lukács had reproduced the specter of utilitarianism once again in Marxism in that he came to believe:

> We must do the lesser evil for the greater good; we must use the means for that end; we must pull the levers at the trials of Bukharin, Radek and the rest to move on the machine of Soviet society. (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 163)

The problem that all Marxists since Marx have faced is how to bridge the gap between the capitalist present and capitalist future. MacIntyre argues that no Marxists have been able to provide an adequate solution to this problem (MacIntyre 1995a, pp. 95–96). Lukács' solution was nevertheless different in that it rejected the determinism and passivity of Kautskyism and saw, contra Engels, the truth of Marx's theory as being independent of their predictive power. Marxism, for Lukács, is the articulation of working-class consciousness, a future shaped through the intentions of self-conscious agents (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 98). Lukács was critical of the separation between 'is' and 'ought', the duality of which manifested itself in an acceptance of the existing social structure against which was posited an abstract, subjective will to change it (Lowy 1979, p. 179). He claimed

that the task of philosophy was to discover a principle by means of which it becomes possible in the first place for an 'ought' to modify existence (Lukács 2018, p. 133). Lukács argues:

> … every theory of the 'ought' is left with a dilemma; either it must allow the – meaningless – existence of empirical reality to survive unchanged with its meaninglessness forming the basis of the 'ought' – for in a meaningful existence the problem of an 'ought' could not arise … Or else, theory must presuppose a principle that transcends the concept of both what 'is' and what 'ought to be'. (Lukács 2018, p. 133)

If, as Jay notes, the Communist party was to be the concrete representation of this attempt to reunite is and ought (Jay 1984, p. 110), a unity lost in the Kantianism of the second International, there were tensions between Lukács view of the proletariat as universal subject and object and the 'reality' of its current status (Jay 1984, p. 112). As Goldmann argued, the category of totality suggests a phenomenon can only be understood by inserting it into the broader structure of which it is a part and which gives it function. On the Lukácsian view, the working class gain an objective function independent of their consciousness of that role (Goldmann 1977, p. 112). The proletariat conceived as universal subject and object provides, in a sense, the theoretical justification for the gap between subjective understanding and objective role. One interpretation of this, to borrow MacIntyre's terminology, is that Marxism introduces 'auxiliary hypotheses' to explain a situation where empirical reality fails to live up to Marxist theory (MacIntyre 1953, p. 98); or at least where theory plays a role in explaining seemingly nonrevolutionary conditions such as undeveloped class consciousness. As MacIntyre would later put it, Lukács was representative, in this case, of Marxists' confidence in their own theories as one response to the problem of the transition to socialism (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 101). Specifically, perhaps the best representations of this problem in Lukács own thought is his rather controversial concept of imputed class consciousness. Lukács defines imputed (sometimes called 'ascribed') class consciousness as:

> the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society. (Lukács 2018, p. 40)

This can be understood as the Lukácsian solution to the problem of nonrevolutionary consciousness and the failure of sections of the working class to break through the reified condition that 'projects a barrier onto immediate conditions' (Lanning 2009, p. 14). Individually, workers are imprisoned in a contemplative dualism of subject and object. As Ryan has argued, reification suggests that workers 'experience their experience' as 'given … fixed and immutable', rather than experiencing that experience as a 'social product'. Reified, the bourgeois society maintains this essentially passive understanding of experience and Lukács claim is that Marxist theory is capable of piercing it (Ryan 1994, pp. 491–492). Only collectively, as a class, 'oriented towards praxis' can the proletariat attain the viewpoint of the totality. Imputed consciousness is 'synonymous' with 'assuming the leadership of society, since an adequate consciousness is already a practice that alters its object' (Stedman Jones 1971, p. 32). Imputed class consciousness therefore aims to solve the riddle of dualism by synthesizing the movement from below with the revolutionary leadership (Blackledge 2012, p. 122). The role of the vanguard party is to narrow the gap between the 'fetishized' empirical—essentially false—consciousness, and the imputed consciousness developed through a revolutionary organization. The concept of imputed class consciousness therefore assumes that genuine class interests differ from actual, empirical consciousness, explaining not only the contradictory nature of consciousness but also pointing toward a Leninist solution to this contradiction (Rees 2000, pp. 21–23).

We will discuss the relationship of worker to party much more when we discuss Lenin, as well as MacIntyre's claim that Marxists reproduce Weberianism as they move toward power. For now, I want to emphasize Lukács thought specifically in relation to the 'Ideal Revolutionary' critique. To bring Nietzsche back in, MacIntyre's argument is that Marxism tends to rely on a 'heroic act of will' to close the gap between nonrevolutionary conditions and the transition to socialism. Marxism assumes a form of active nihilism in attempting to destroy a meaningless world and bring a new one into being. The specific problem with the kind of Lukácsian response to nonrevolutionary conditions—in this case, the empirical' consciousness of the working class—in the form of the theory of imputed class consciousness, is rooted in Lukács overemphasis on the 'ought' of socialism. This 'ought', on Lukács' view, turns on the development of consciousness, he states: 'the struggle of the communist party is about the class consciousness of the proletariat and not the actual transformation of

society itself' (Lukács quoted in Westerman 2010, p. 123). In a situation of moral incoherence and revolutionary barrenness, the 'ought' of socialism manifests itself as an unbearable weight on the working class to assume the role of the 'ideal proletariat'. Imputed consciousness, on this interpretation, acts as an auxiliary hypothesis in order to maintain an increasingly unjustifiable faith in the working class by introducing the vanguard party to narrow the gap between empirical and imputed consciousness. The 'lunge' toward the 'ought' of socialism is so dominating that there is a tendency to place less emphasis on the 'objective' historical conditions required to take the 'revolutionary plunge', emphasizing instead the 'consciousness that can be imprinted on history like a kind of germ matter' (Gouldner 1980, pp. 45–46).

Developing these arguments, Lowy notes that Adam Schaff argued that Lukács effectively underestimated the role of the existing, empirical consciousness of the proletariat, just as he placed too much emphasis on what 'ought' to exist. The result of this was that Lukács collapsed into 'vanguardist sectarianism' and 'subjectivist voluntarism' (quoted in Lowy 1979, pp. 176–177), in much the same way that MacIntyre suggests Marxists, faced with the conditions of moral impoverishment, have a tendency to do. Either the party or the worker is conceptualized in such a way that their assigned historical role far outweighs their practical ability to close the gap between theory and empirical reality. Schaff's position, on this interpretation, suggests that Lukács 'diminished the role of working class consciousness … to the point of almost totally ignoring it' (Larrain 1988, p. 61). Lukács, despite his brilliance, came to embrace the deification of the party and was no more able to find an objective basis for socialism than any of the numerous, and often greatly inferior, Marxists that preceded or followed him.

The gap between a nonrevolutionary reality and the perceived agent of revolutionary change, on MacIntyre's interpretation, compels Lukács to create the 'ideal proletariat' to bridge that gap through a heroic 'act of will'. The concept of imputed class consciousness reflects a tendency in Marxism to be unwilling or unable (or both) to recognize the inapplicability of their theory to empirical reality. This is closely related to another problem with Marxism. While making claims to rational self-determination, Marxism tends to reproduce those social relations of manipulation that are to be found at the core of any attempt to break from the standpoint of civil society from within the resources of modernity. One reason for this, MacIntyre argues, is that Marxists failed to take seriously enough

the concept of rational determination in that they consistently refused to put it into practice. Specifically, Marxists such as Lenin refused to entertain the possibility that workers might conceive of an end goal that was different from socialism (MacIntyre 2011, p. 177). Such diversions were treated, MacIntyre argues, as ideological deformations or examples of false consciousness. Lenin, it has been argued, was a 'historical' voluntarist in that he essentially substituted historical stages that must be passed through for a focus on political action (O'Rourke 1974, p. 77). One consequence of this was a view of the working class that shifted away from Marx's conception of revolutionary practice as outlined in the third Thesis on Feuerbach. This meant that workers were effectively treated in an instrumental fashion, in that they were manipulated toward ends which they themselves might not have chosen.

If Lukács is reflective of the Marxist tendency to place an inordinate amount of faith in the working class to deliver socialism, through the medium of the Leninist party, Lenin's own Übermensch is represented too by the revolutionary party. MacIntyre's contemporary view of Lenin here is that he essentially understood the revolutionary party 'as representing a collective subject with a universal interest' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 177). This view of Lenin is much closer to when MacIntyre first engaged with Marxism in 1953. MacIntyre has to an extent gone full circle with Lenin, moving from a critical interpretation, via a much more positive one, and back to a critical contemporary view. In 1953, he saw a key debate in Marxism as being whether socialism was to be achieved through the working class or the revolutionary party (MacIntyre 1953, p. 103). MacIntyre argues that the latter won the day, interpreting the shift to a revolutionary party as being a shift to the centralization of power and leading, eventually, to dictatorship. In the late 1950s, MacIntyre argued that Lenin's Hegelian conversion moved him away from a top-down, manipulative conception of the relationship between worker and party (MacIntyre 1958), yet this is exactly the interpretation that the contemporary MacIntyre has returned to.

The difference between MacIntyre's critique of Lenin in 1953 and his contemporary position is that, in the latter, he conceives of Lenin's voluntarism as being a *necessary* response to a morally impoverished modernity. The problem with any kind of Marxist movement is that they are forced into a position where it becomes incumbent on the worker or the party (usually the former embodied in the latter) to change the 'fundamental orientation' of the movement, the possibility of which is no more than a 'voluntaristic illusion' (Feenburg 1988, pp. 133–135).

Voluntarism is seen no longer as one response, but the only response, and one that has its theoretical roots in Lenin and Lukács and is practically manifested in any Marxist attempt to break from the standpoint of civil society. This is why, on MacIntyre's terms, the Marxist responses to the moral impoverishment of modernity are specifically Nietzschean fantasies. They rest on an idealized conception of worker and party that reproduces Nietzsche's conception of the Übermensch as a voluntaristic attempt to bring a new world into being, when faced with the meaninglessness of the old.

Late modernity structurally denies the conditions through which moral agency, on MacIntyre's view, can develop—if not completely, at least in terms of the way that Marxism conceives of ethical, revolutionary practice developing. Without moral agency there can be no revolutionary practice of the kind envisaged by Marx in the ToF. The 'coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing' is no longer a possibility from within revolutionary socialism (Marx 1969, p. 13). Marxism, in the morally barren landscape of late modernity, mirrors the socially institutionalized relations of manipulation, characterized by its instrumental view of the relationship between worker and party. It is immediately clear that MacIntyre's views here again represent an extension of claims previously reserved for certain forms of Marxism, to Marxism as such. The very premise of essays such as NFTMW, BTCOR and FaR was that Marxism could potentially concretize an ethical practice that was neither morally incoherent nor meaningless, nor socially manipulative. In the final section, we explore these criticisms much further by examining more closely MacIntyre's association of Marxism with Weberianism, specifically in terms of Marxist politics and their move toward power. This means that Lenin, in particular, continues to inform an important part of this discussion. First, we explore further MacIntyre's view that Marxism fails to break from the inadequate moral frameworks characteristic of late modernity.

The Moral Foundations of Marxism

MacIntyre's critique of Marxism here makes two claims, one of which is explicit and the other implicit. The explicit claim is one that is made largely on empirical grounds. It is a claim that states, through an examination of the history of Marxist debates, Marxism has done nothing but offer inadequate Kantian or Utilitarian justifications for the moral stances

that they have taken. The second, implicit claim is one that we have already been exploring in this chapter. This is the claim that, as a result of the conditions of late modernity and Marxism's failure to break from the standpoint of civil society, Marxism is unable to do anything but collapse into such inadequate justifications. On this view, it is not simply a matter of previously inadequate responses; it is that all such responses must necessarily be inadequate from within the resources of Marxism. In the discussion of MacIntyre's contributions to the NR, in response to figures such as Thompson and Kolakowski, we have already seen how MacIntyre has been developing this critique for over fifty years. Yet it is still necessary to provide some further commentary on what it is about Kantianism and Utilitarianism that MacIntyre finds so inadequate. Following this, we will examine the work of some of those figures whom MacIntyre sees as being representative of this tendency in Marxism—Bernstein, Trotsky, Kautsky and others. MacIntyre's position in AV is that the moral history of Marxism fatally undermines its own claim to any coherent, Marxist morality:

> … the claim of Marxism to a morally distinctive standpoint is undermined by Marxism's own moral history. In all those crises in which Marxists have had to take explicit moral stances-that over Bernstein's revisionism in German social democracy at the turn of the century or that over Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin and the Hungarian revolt in 1956, for example-Marxists have always fallen back into relatively straightforward versions of Kantianism or utilitarianism. (MacIntyre 2007, p. 261)

The most sustained critique of Kantianism and its consequences for morality is addressed in 1981s AV. MacIntyre's critique of Kantianism and liberalism has remained relatively unchanged throughout his intellectual career and it provides the most complete refutation of the practical and theoretical value of a liberal conception of morality. MacIntyre characterizes Kant in ASHOE as 'the typical and supreme representative of the Enlightenment' in that his moral standpoint represented and was influenced by those 'two idols' of the Enlightenment—physics and empiricism (MacIntyre 1991a, p. 190). Morality and human nature for Kant, like physics, could be studied empirically and, once discovered and experienced, the laws of morality, like the laws of physics, were unchangeable and completely knowable. In AV, MacIntyre compares the process of discovering the maxims of morality for Kant to the process

of arithmetic (MacIntyre 2007, p. 44). It is simply a process of knowing what those maxims that express the moral laws are and therefore discovering what it is to be rational simultaneously discovers what it is to be moral. Kant identifies the relationship between reason and morality as one where reason provides an objective knowledge of the laws of morality:

> But how is consciousness of that moral law possible? We can become aware of pure practical [moral] laws just as we are aware of pure theoretical principles, by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us and to the setting aside of all empirical conditions to which reason directs us. (Kant 1997, p. 27)

Kant 'discovered' that the unchangeable choice in moral action was a choice between acting on our 'determined physical and psychological' inclination and acting in concurrence with our 'duty' (MacIntyre 1991a, pp. 192–193). This 'duty' manifested itself in the form of a law which becomes known to all rational men through their desire to make that law a universally recognizable and agreeable one, in effect, a law that would appear 'natural' to all men. If one were to think rationally, at each moment in the decision-making process, the choice of 'duty' would be one that would be universally recognized as being the correct thing to do in a certain situation—in opposition to the desire or inclination of man which may necessitate a different choice. As Eagleton puts it:

> For Kant, one becomes an authentic human subject – free, rational and autonomous – only by bowing to the sovereignty of a law which regulates and harmonises one's ends in accordance with the ends of all other such free, rational beings. (Eagleton 2009, p. 104)

Despite the fact that, for Kant, these universal maxims are not without exceptions or conditions (Wood 2005, pp. 131–132), actions become morally justifiable through an assertion that they are universalizable. The fundamental law in Kant is: 'so act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law' (Kant 1997, p. 28). It is this applied universality that acts to compel the individual in the sphere of morality to act out of a 'duty' to others who are also rationally guided by the same principle. It is this 'duty' that compels me to act against my self-interest as I can rationally recognize that it

is the act of the deception itself which, based on my free-thinking rationalism, cannot be and should not be universalized. The essentially simple moral choice, on Kant's terms, is one between doing what I desire to do and doing what I know is right.

The kind of moral thinking outlined by Kant, and emulated by many others such as Sartre (Sartre 1966, p. 31), creates an immediate distinction between what it is to act morally and what it is to act out of desire; the moral imperative to do one's duty simply because it is one's duty, rather than from any other motivation, provides the basis for morality (Slote 1992, p. 11). For Kant, as rational agents we are subject to the moral law. We are compelled to act in accordance to that law *only* out of respect for it, not because of our inclination. To act in accordance with this law is to have 'freed ourselves' from our desires (MacIntyre 2004, p. 29). Kant's freeing of the will from desire and inclination means that ethics does not evaluate what agents want, only what must be done (Lutz 2012, pp. 86–87). The moral imperative, in Kant's view, is necessary to create clear, moral choices. Desire and happiness are too vague and unreliable notions to make a moral appeal to, so this necessitates that 'the sphere in which happiness is to be pursued is sharply distinguished from the sphere of morality' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 54). As we saw in NFTMW, Kant's understanding of morality necessitated that:

> The 'ought' of morality is utterly divorced from the 'is' of desire. This divorce is most strikingly presented in the position taken by Kant that it is a defining characteristic of moral actions that they shall not be performed from inclination. (MacIntyre 1959a, pp. 89–90)

MacIntyre has always seen this Kantian separation of morality and desire as a fundamental failing of liberal morality and a failing that is embodied in the modern world. Whether as a Marxist or a revolutionary Aristotelian, MacIntyre has always maintained that a coherent ethical framework must have some kind of foundational basis in genuine human desires and these must provide the standard for moral judgment (Murphy 2003b, p. 6). Morality, on MacIntyre's view, must be understood as the proper satisfaction of our desires (Knight 2007, p. 105). Yet this is a conception of morality that has been expunged from the modern world. If Kant is the supreme being of the Enlightenment, what he represents, on MacIntyre's views, is the moral incoherence and fragmentation that is characteristic of the post-Enlightenment world, removing in 'one blow'

any link between good and right, need and desire (MacIntyre 1959b, p. 120). While the Enlightenment period rejected God as the basis for morality, it retained the structure of its moral thinking in that morality was nevertheless conceived in terms of obeying and following moral rules, rather than discovering what is right through considering our desires (Lutz 2012, p. 59). Furthermore, it rejected the Aristotelian notion of a world to be teleologically comprehended 'ultimately in terms of final causes' and their 'natural end' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 81). What is left, once the teleological element of ethics that provides an understanding of what human beings can or should become is removed, is an incoherent and fragmented scheme of moral precepts, such as with the Kantian precept of duty. The moral 'ought' continues to be used in 'new contexts', deprived of the moral scheme where they once at home, and cut off from the beliefs 'necessary for them to be understood' (MacIntyre 1965b, p. 135). The Kantian schematic for morality therefore 'inherited incoherent fragments from a once coherent scheme of thought and action' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 91). The scientific catastrophe imagined in the 'disquieting suggestion' of AV is not, in fact, at all imaginary; its reality is born out in the philosophical equivalent of modern moral life (Lutz 2012, p. 48).

The central question to be answered in philosophy is, argues MacIntyre, 'What are those principles governing action to which no rational human being can deny his or her assent?' (MacIntyre 1988, p. 176). Kant's categorical imperative provided an answer to this but it failed to realize that is was but one answer among many possible ones. Hume, Mill, Kant and their heirs had all provided various answers to similar sorts of questions but without some sort of teleological basis in which to ground the question of morality they were essentially endlessly competing moral positions; as MacIntyre puts it 'they are engaged in a battle in which no one is finally defeated, only because no one is ever the victor' (MacIntyre 1988, p. 176). Moral actions had become abstracted from the teleological context which gave them their meaning and coherence, instead being reduced to a matter of abstract, individualistic preference. What was left were fragmented elements of this or that tradition of moral thought that had no relation to the context from which they originated. Individuals therefore had no choice but to adhere to this or that particular fragment, not through an understanding of the context from where they developed—a vital condition of genuine moral reasoning—but through retaining, incoherently, values and moral judgments which best expressed their own personal preferences.

It is only through an understanding of the social context that created those moral precepts, argues MacIntyre, that individuals engaged in moral practice could understand not only why certain actions were right or wrong but why it was in their interest, and the interest of others, to pursue a particular course of moral action (MacIntyre 2007, p. 55). The post-Enlightenment Kantian attempt to justify morality was one that was inevitably doomed to failure as it had removed this element of synthesis—the telos—which bound human nature and moral judgments together. In this context, morality essentially assumes the form of emotivism, which MacIntyre defines as:

> the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character. (MacIntyre 2007, p. 12)

MacIntyre's critique of Marxism is that, while it claims a distinctive moral standpoint, in reality it reproduces the ethos of the liberal individualist world by adopting and mirroring its ontological individualism and inadequate moral frameworks, resorting either to Kantian or utilitarian solutions to moral dilemmas (MacIntyre 2007, p. xviii). Marxism takes on the 'moral color' of its liberal surroundings, unable to provide a distinctive moral standpoint, at least in part because it shed the Hegelian-based view of human nature which might enable it to do so (MacIntyre 1995a, pp. 130–132). This latter claim, of course, coincides with MacIntyre's own rejection of human nature as a basis for ethics in 1966 which, while later rescinded, still excludes Marxism from any solution to the problem. MacIntyre argues that Marxism fails to justify 'Marx's ontology of individuals-in-relation' (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 225). In reality, while claiming this distinctive socialized standpoint, Marxism either mirrors the individualism of liberal modernity reflected in Kant or, alternatively, embraces some kind of utilitarian means-end morality and their voluntarist, manipulative variations. It is this 'philosophical foundationlessness' (Knight 2000, pp. 76–77), a distinct lack of any first principles, that compels Marxism to adopt the moral frameworks of liberal modernity.

To justify this claim, MacIntyre points to key figures in Marxism's history that embody such moral reasoning, as well as the response to specific events from those within the Marxist tradition. Even those working

squarely within the classical Marxist tradition agree that MacIntyre is 'almost right' about this (Callinicos 2011, p. 36). It is therefore useful to expand MacIntyre's critique here by exploring some of those figures whom MacIntyre takes to be representative of Marxism's failings and that form an important part of his contemporary rejection of Marxism. Part of MacIntyre's claim has already been explored in the second chapter. We have seen, as far back as the 1950s, MacIntyre predicated his search for a third moral position on what he saw as the inadequate Kantian and utilitarian responses to the events of 1956. There is nothing qualitatively new in MacIntyre's criticism of Marxism here. Rather, in what is becoming an increasingly familiar fashion, MacIntyre is concerned with generalizing that critique and fleshing out the premises on which it is based. I begin with the Kantian turn before addressing the utilitarian argument.

MacIntyre's argument, that Marxism fails to provide distinctive moral foundations for socialism is often justified by turning to the Marxists of the Second International and beyond. Specifically, the neo-Kantianism of Marxists such as Bernstein provides one side of the argument, with the determinism of Kautsky another and, later, the consequentialism of Trotsky (MacIntyre 1969, 1995a, 2007). The suggestion is that the neo-Kantians and their determinist, economic fatalist rivals, embodied, respectively, in Bernstein and Kautsky, amounted to ideological expressions of a nonrevolutionary age still trapped within the limitations of bourgeois thought (Blackledge 2012, p. 122; Jay 1984, p. 110). Adler, Vorlander and Bernstein, among others, attempted to answer the question about the nature of the moral authority of socialism by returning to Kant.

Many of those associated with the second International were resolutely anti-Hegelian. The aversion to, and often ignorance of, Hegel provided the motivation for seeking an ethical justification for socialism beyond the realm of the Hegelian dialectic. Indeed, the corollary to a powerfully 'anti-Hegelian animus' is often an attraction to Kant (Wayne 2014, p. 20). Bernstein, it has been noted, knew nothing of Hegel nor did he want to, as he displayed 'abhorrence' for the Hegelian dialectic (McLellan 2007, p. 35). This was not untypical, with many in the period holding the same view of Hegel (Kolakowski 1978, pp. 104–105). Yet if Bernstein and Kautsky shared an aversion to Hegel, the neo-Kantian turn of the former was predicated on a rejection of what he saw as the 'crude empiricism and mechanical and fatalistic distortion

of Marx's ideas' within the second international (Blackledge 2012, p. 109). However, this version of Marxism had very little to do with Marx's ideas and Bernstein's misinterpretation of historical materialism, stemmed indeed from Bernstein's aversion to, and misunderstanding of, Hegel (McLellan 2007, p. 35).

In his Marxist period, MacIntyre would have regarded this expulsion of Hegel as disastrous. That is to say the Marxism of both Bernstein and Kautsky represent inadequacies within Marxism, even if one continues to accept that some form of Marxism can provide coherent moral foundations. In 1958 MacIntyre argued that when Marxism became inhuman and deterministic it was usually as a consequence of their neglecting the centrality of Hegel to Marx's thought (1958). Indeed, the two inadequate moral frameworks that dominated Marxism in this period are typical, from MacIntyre's perspective, of such a rejection. Lichteim has argued that the whole post-1975 history of social democracy is a history of trying to resolve the tensions between the 'idealist core' of Marx's vision and the 'scientific pretensions draped' around it (Lichteim 1961, p. 241). On this interpretation, Bernstein represents an inadequate attempt to emphasize the former while Kautsky an equally inadequate attempt to stress the latter. Bernstein understood Marxism as inherently idealistic rather than scientific, in that its aims expressed the interests of the working class rather than the results of scientific investigation (Tudor 1993, p. xxxiv). Like Adler, who individualized and de-historicized ethics (Goldmann 1968), Bernstein was part of a group of neo-Kantians who claimed to have:

> found the connection between Marx and Kant in the idea that socialism must be complemented by an ethical justification of its ends such as is given in the practical philosophy of Kant. (Adler quoted in Goldmann 1968).

Yet the attempt to incorporate Kant's second 'critique', that every person is an end in themselves, was unable to resolve the contradictions of bourgeois society. As Wayne argues, the capitalist asserts the right to the 'end' of private property, which forces the property-less into the position of means to that socially-embodied and institutionalized end (Wayne 2014, p. 18). The neo-Kantians were characterized by their inability to resolve the antimonies of bourgeois society. They represented, in the split between fact and value and the free-floating 'ought',

separated from 'is', one side of the later inadequate moral response to Stalinism that MacIntyre had characterized in Notes. Kant, MacIntyre argued in AV, provided a 'rational voice' for an emerging liberal individualism (MacIntyre 2007, p. 268). Yet precisely because Kant was the voice of liberal individualism, this meant that he was unable to overcome the fact-value distinction characteristic of it. Any Marxist attempt, on MacIntyre's view, to adopt such a standpoint would be bound to repeat its failings. MacIntyre, in interpreting Goldmann, argues Kant stands at the extreme point of the rift between fact and value; a tragic figure in the Pascalian sense, in that virtue and happiness can only be reconciled by a divine power that does not exist. Marxism's neo-Kantians were doomed to repeat this tragedy (MacIntyre 1964a, p. 315). Bernstein remained trapped within the limits of bourgeois morality, assuming a liberal standpoint to approach the question of the transition to socialism. As Luxemburg's critique suggests, Bernstein reflected a dualistic approach that reduced the question of the moral foundations of socialism to a question of personal preference, 'almost in the same manner in which cinnamon or pepper is weighed out in a consumers' cooperative store' (Luxemburg 1970, p. 76).

Yet, on MacIntyre's view, Luxemburg fared little better in explicating the moral foundations of socialism. Indeed, Luxemburg 'avoided coming to grips with this question at all' (MacIntyre 1969, p. 378). Luxemburg had argued that the economic conditions of capitalism meant that socialism had become a 'historic necessity' (Luxemburg 1970, p. 63). Socialism would be a consequence of the growing contradictions of capitalism and 'the comprehension by the working class of the unavoidability of the suppression of these contradictions through a social transformation' (Luxemburg 1970, p. 58). Due to her belief in the inevitability of capitalist breakdown, this forced Luxemburg into a voluntaristic faith in the working class to become the revolutionary agent of change (Kuhn 2005, p. 10). This fatalistic approach suggested that, while critical of both Bernstein's reformism and his belief that a social system could be 'justified or condemned on grounds that were somehow independent of that system' (Tudor 1993, p. xxxiv), Luxemburg never pointed to any concrete ethical alternative.

The flipside to the neo-Kantianism or the voluntarism of the second international was the Kautskyist confidence in the objective march of history. Like Bernstein, Kautsky was ignorant of Hegel, seeing in his thought only determinism, speculative and conservative tendencies

(McLellan 2007, p. 36). Indeed, Lenin became, famously, hugely critical of Kautsky, at least partially because he understood Kautsky as rejecting dialectical thought for what he called sophistry and eclecticism, meaning he had essentially swapped a Marxist standpoint for bourgeois liberalism (Lenin 1918). Lichteim describes Kautsky as 'one of those fortunate people who never encounter a serious doubt or feel uncertain about the direction of their interests' (Lichteim 1961, p. 265). This manifested itself in his unswerving, fatalistic belief in the inevitable collapse of capitalism. Kautsky's fatalistic politics was rooted in his belief in the automatism of the class struggle; economic inequality would compel workers to a realization that the social-democratic program was the only way to free themselves from capitalism and consequently that their active embrace of socialist politics was inevitable (Lichteim 1961, p. 265; Blackledge 2006, p. 353). So while they were theoretically seemingly poles apart, politically the Bernstein revisionists and the Kautskyians both tended to reformism. The former saw capitalism as being stabilized from crises, the latter its imminent doom, meaning that revolutionary activity, from both positions, would have little effect. Whether through elections or the Kautskyian belief in the 'defensive violence' of the working class, the classical theories of social democracy all envisaged a 'continuous and smooth' growth in organization and consciousness (Harman 1968). As MacIntyre argues, a confidence in capitalism's ability to self-regulate, or unrealistic 'prophecies of doom', both reflect and reinforce an ideology of reformism embodied in social life (MacIntyre 1961, pp. 190–191).

MacIntyre interprets Kautsky's response to the neo-Kantianism of the second international as 'crude utilitarianism', despite not elaborating greatly on this argument (MacIntyre 1969, p. 378). Yet this was the charge he leveled against Stalinism in NFTMW and, indeed, the terminology is exactly the same (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 98). Kautsky, in the following passage, discusses what he sees as the inapplicability of Kant's second critique to communism:

> The "timeless moral law", that man ought to be an end, and at no time simply a means, has itself only an "end" in a society in which men are used by other men simply as means to their ends. In a communist society, this possibility disappears and with that goes the necessity of the Kantian Programme for the "entire future world history". (Kautsky 1906)

Kautsky's riposte of Kantian socialism is simply to say that a future communist society will have dispensed with the type of society where men are used by other men as means to ends. In one sense, the moral question is swerved; in another sense it is not only swerved but placed entirely in the future. The future—the 'end goal' of communism is posited as the solution to the problem, therefore the question of morality is subordinated, dissolved into that future. It is in this way that utilitarianism mirrors the Stalinist amorality that MacIntyre attacked in NFTMW, in that the moral content of socialism is bypassed completely and treated as resolved through the complete subordination of means to ends. It is clear that many would agree that Kautsky had 'no idea' about Kant, reflective of his 'complete lack of understanding' of philosophical problems (Kolakowski 1978, p. 35). Yet MacIntyre's point is that Kautsky is not just individually deficient, it is that he represents a much more general tendency in Marxism to ground the moral justification for socialism through a means-end framework.

MacIntyre has long argued that utilitarianism is so dominant precisely because we have no means of reaching a moral agreement (MacIntyre 1964b, p. 2). In a situation of fragmented 'practical and evaluative discourse', 'contemporary ideological claims' come to the fore (MacIntyre 1995b, pp. xxvi–xxvii). When moral dilemmas are presented in such a situation it is the 'characteristic tendency' to adopt utilitarianism in order to try to resolve these (MacIntyre 1975, p. 17). Utilitarianism works as a kind of 'second' morality to fall back on because it has no use for first or absolute principles, potentially legitimizing any or all actions (MacIntyre 1964b, p. 2). Much like Marx, who believed utilitarianism to be the 'true child of the enlightenment' (Murray 1988, p. 74), in that he saw real, human relationships between individuals subverted to relationships of utility, therefore dissolving 'all the manifold relationships of men to one another into the one relationship of usefulness' (Marx in Murray 1988, p. 73).

MacIntyre extends the utilitarian critique beyond the second international to later Marxists, specifically Trotsky. In *Their Morals and Ours*, Trotsky argues that 'a means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified'. Yet Trotsky's answer, seemingly, is to retreat from morality in favor of assigning primacy to the furthering of the proletarian cause. Trotsky argues that what is morally permissible is 'that … which really leads to the liberation of mankind'.

Consequently for Trotsky, 'lying, frame-up, betrayal, murder … are … permissible and obligatory [if they] unite the revolutionary proletariat' (Trotsky 1938). Even, for MacIntyre, 'the most honest, perceptive, and intelligent of post-1930 Marxists' was unable or unwilling to provide a morally adequate and distinctive standpoint for Marxism (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 120).

Dewey, an admirer of Trotsky, nevertheless noted that Trotsky's claim to hold the 'sound principle' of the interdependence of means and ends was a problematic one that could not be fully justified through his own theory. Dewey argues, for Trotsky, means are 'deduced' from an independent source, from the 'law of all laws of social development', that is, from the class struggle. So rather than *inter*dependence, Dewey argues that with Trotsky (and indeed Marxism generally) the end is dependent on the means but the means are not derived from the end. The class struggle is posited as the only means to reach the end, and it is an unquestioned means, thus automatically 'absolving' it from the need to critically evaluate such means (Dewey 1938). The purported interdependence does not actually exist. On this view, Trotsky breaks from MacIntyre's Marxist attempt in the 1950s to understand a form of ethical practice in which means and ends truly 'interpenetrate' in history itself (MacIntyre 1959a, p. 96).

Trotsky's position, argues MacIntyre, exemplifies 'more sharply than any other the questions which exhibit the major flaws of utilitarianism' (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 128). The problem of utilitarianism, including Marxist utilitarianism, was that the question of the concept of 'happiness' itself is necessarily vague and subjective, and 'the goods which man pursue are in fact various, heterogeneous, and conflicting' (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 128). There is a fundamental problem, on MacIntyre's view, in attempting to provide a kind of objective yardstick—the liberation of mankind—against which such goods can be judged and ordered. As we saw with Kautsky, Marxism tends to put its political and moral goals in the future (MacIntyre 1995a, p. 129), creating a tendency toward consequentialism in that the morals and principles of the present are sacrificed toward some future goal of communism. As Knight points out, MacIntyre's contemporary revolutionary Aristotelianism aims to move beyond Marxism precisely because its conception of practice is actualized in the present, not directed toward some future construction as with Marxism (Knight 2007, p. 120).

The second international specifically, extended to Marxism generally, is reflective of Marxism's inability to break from the standpoint of civil society. Kantian and utilitarian responses to the question of the moral foundations of socialism are both forms of alienation within capitalism rather than moral guides (MacIntyre 1959a). As with all modern moralities, from MacIntyre's perspective, and despite their attempts to devise a new teleology as utilitarianism does, their underlying purpose is manipulation and the pursuit of power (Lutz 2012, p. 65). MacIntyre has long recognized the inadequacies of the Kantian and utilitarian moral frameworks representative of late modernity. The application of this critique to the Marxists of the second international confirms, rather than substantially changes, this critique. What is more significant is that MacIntyre now also extends this critique to all forms of Marxism and any Marxist attempt, he believes, to think through the moral foundations of socialism will find incoherence, or power masquerading as morality, or both. MacIntyre defended Marxism against the charge of 'futurism' in NFTMW while also distinguishing a revolutionary ethics from the moral individualism of Kant. Indeed, a key aim of the Marxist MacIntyre was to distinguish the humanist core of Marx's thought from its deterministic corruption at the hands of the Stalinists. So if MacIntyre continues to blur the boundaries between his critique of distorted Marxism and all forms of Marxism, he does so because he increasingly believes that it is only from outside the resources of Marxism that Marx's own ideas on revolutionary practice can be best expressed and developed. More contentious targets than Kautsky and Bernstein, perhaps, are Lenin and Lukács. However, as we have seen, MacIntyre sees both Lenin and Lukács, despite their undeniable political and philosophical strengths, as nevertheless reproducing their own versions of the Nietzschean will to power, essentially providing only a simulacrum of morality.

Marxism and the Weberian Critique

As we come to the final criticism of Marxism in AV, it is perhaps important to emphasize the inter-dependence of MacIntyre's critique. MacIntyre's critique is quite complex and wide-reaching so it is useful to break it down into sections. However, each section builds on and develops the claims of all the others. The problem of informed desire is a result of the moral impoverishment of modernity; the moral

impoverishment of modernity is reflected in the inadequate moral frameworks of Kantianism and Utilitarianism; Marxism's inability to think through the moral foundations of socialism reflects these frameworks, and so on. This final section continues in the same vein. The structure is quite similar, in that it begins by discussing what MacIntyre means by Weberian and how this is embodied in social life and its institutions. Following this, we will see how MacIntyre argues that Marxism reproduces what he sees as the inherently manipulative nature of modern social life and its theoretical assumptions in its political practice:

> … as Marxists move towards power they always tend to become Weberians. Here I was of course speaking of Marxists at their best in, say, Yugoslavia or Italy; the barbarous despotism of the collective Tsardom which reigns in Moscow can be taken to be as irrelevant to the question of the moral substance of Marxism as the life of the Borgia pope was to that of the moral substance of Christianity. Nonetheless Marxism has recommended itself precisely as a guide to practice, as a politics of a peculiarly illuminating kind. Yet it is just here that it has been of singularly little help for some time now. (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 261–262)

This critique of Marxism immediately presents itself as a practical problem, empirically verifiable by the political practice of various Marxists and their revolutionary movements. This is of course partially true. MacIntyre does indeed suggest that Marxism as a political practice is fundamentally inadequate and this is one area where he remains unflinching in his rejection of Marxism (MacIntyre 1995b, p. 155). Yet to fully appreciate this critique involves understanding what MacIntyre characterizes as the nature of modern social relations, their theoretical presuppositions, and Marxism's practical reproduction of these theoretical inadequacies. As we have seen, in attempting to provide an ethical justification for socialism, MacIntyre states that Marxists tend to adopt the abstract 'ought' of Kant or the consequentialism of utilitarian thinking, despite their claims to be distinct from and opposed to liberal individualism. Previous to this discussion, we also saw how Marxism's inability to provide any such ethical justification for socialism turned on its philosophical inadequacies of being unable to solve the problem of informed desire within the context of the moral impoverishment of modernity.

We have therefore already discussed how MacIntyre views both the Kantian and utilitarian turn in moral thinking as responses to the failure of the Enlightenment project. MacIntyre continues to assert that these attempts 'failed and fail' to provide any kind of rational justification for moral authority. Yet, importantly, in their attempt to make these succeed, 'social as well as intellectual transformations' were nevertheless accomplished (MacIntyre 2007, p. 62). It is such transformations and their consequences that provide the basis of MacIntyre's critique of Marxism here. Any kind of utility or rights-based moral framework MacIntyre describes as 'moral fictions' in that they claim to provide 'objective and impersonal' criterion but, in reality, they do not (MacIntyre 2007, p. 62). This is one reason why Nietzsche was one of the key theorists of the modern age as he identified that such moral claims, at their foundations, amounted to nothing more than expressions of personal preference and the will to power. If the dominant moral frameworks of modernity are manipulative, it is Weber, whom MacIntyre elevates to a position equal with Nietzsche, who explains the nature of those modern manipulative practices (MacIntyre 2007, p. 86). MacIntyre argues that the dominance of manipulative social relations in modernity and the historical process through which the expulsion of 'the narrative understanding of the unity of human life' from modern society occurred are part of 'one and the same' process (MacIntyre 2007, p. 228). A conception of the human good as an individualized good abstracted from its social relationships has become embodied in practice within the social life of modernity (MacIntyre 1999b, p. 220).

Weber's influence on MacIntyre, as Pinkard suggests, is in seeing the rise of capitalism as being a 'kind of shorthand for political and moral individualism' (Pinkard 2003, p. 179); the manipulative social relationships that capitalism creates are reflective of an inadequate socially-embodied mode of practice (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xxvii). What liberal modernity embodies and reinforces, suggests MacIntyre, is a very specific, mechanical model of human action resulting from the expulsion of Aristotelian concepts such as final causes and natural ends. A commitment to 'scientific' explanation demands the detachment of concepts like desire, reason and choice from notions of good and virtue, and these are then placed in the separate sub-discipline of ethics. Such concepts have an 'internal complexity', fears, hopes and desires are too 'contestable and

'doubtful' to be classed as scientific, law-like evidence (MacIntyre 2007, p. 83). As McMylor points out, the separation of fact and value when 'transferred onto the analysis of social relations' has a 'quite awesome' effect in that it consequently creates an irresolvable contradiction. At the heart of this contradiction is the notion that liberalism makes the individual morally sovereign and free to choose. However, the reality is that society must ultimately coerce in order to maintain stability and coherence, thus liberalism fails even on its own terms as:

> those liberal subjects who manage or engineer social reality, have little choice but to treat others in the manner of a Quinian social science programme. (McMylor 1994, p. 136)

MacIntyre is arguing that the intellectual transformation of modern morality is both embodied in, and an embodiment of, the social order itself which comes to mirror morality-as-manipulation. In this barren moral and social environment, a particular type of character flourishes. This is a character that 'embodies emotivism' in that, at the heart of this social role, is the reality that morality is nothing more than personal preference and the resultant role of the 'manager' is to manipulate others to do as you wish (Lutz 2012, p. 58). These social roles are of a particular type in that they 'also bear particular moral ideals and become representative of their social order through so doing' (Beadle in Sinnicks 2018, p. 736). As Davidson argues, these social roles largely determine their actions in much the same way as Marx, in *Capital*, suggests that the capitalist 'acts as the social embodiment of capital, regardless of personal wishes' (Davidson 2016, pp. 173–174).

The type of order in late modernity that produces such characters is at least partially defined by a particular type of rationality—bureaucratic rationality. The manager is inherently Weberian in nature in that his or her role is to match means to end without ever questioning those ends. This puts bureaucratic rationality immediately at odds with any kind of Aristotelian understanding of rationality, integral to which is the notion that both ends and means are not 'beyond the reach of reason' (Knight 2007, p. 135). Therefore bureaucratic, instrumental rationality represents the subordination of goods of excellence to goods of effectiveness (Knight 2007, p. 165), epitomized in the imputed role of the manager within such societies.

The key quality that these managerial representatives of the social order claim to possess is what MacIntyre calls expertise. MacIntyre states that expertise is an 'alleged quality of effectiveness', effective, that is, in manipulating people into 'compliant patterns of behaviour'. This is one reason why the manager's self-perception of moral neutrality is highly questionable, as manipulation is central to effectiveness (MacIntyre 2007, pp. 74–75). Effectiveness is, in reality, a quality that managers rarely have. Yet, to legitimate their social role, it is important that it is believed that they do indeed possess this quality of expertise. Whether a social scientist, manager or revolutionary, 'like the unicorn, a social existence and social importance is conferred upon him as long as people believe in him' (MacIntyre 1973, p. 339).

What kind of believed-in social theory and practice of knowledge must the manager claim to have? As MacIntyre puts it:

> … the goal is the construction of law-like generalizations … the type of generalization sought is of such a kind that it will afford a level for producing predictable changes in social structures … the kind of knowledge which a manager has to have is causal, expressible in generalizations, and must provide him with an essentially manipulative ability. (MacIntyre 1979, pp. 63–64)

Late modernity therefore seemingly embodies an understanding and model of human behavior that is the very essence of what MacIntyre, in developing ideas from Marx's ToF and elsewhere, understands to be fundamentally inadequate. Both within his overtly Marxist works and beyond them, MacIntyre has long argued that any kind of mechanical model of behavior that purports to prediction and that places causality before 'intentions, motives and reasons' must fail (MacIntyre 1967. p. 223). Indeed, any adequate characterization of human action must oppose any mechanistic generalization about both causality and noncausality. What is necessary is:

> a much fuller characterization of the concept of the human person in which the role of both causes on the one hand and of motives, reasons, and intentions on the other will become clear. (MacIntyre 1966, p. 207)

As we have seen, the kind of mechanical model of human action that MacIntyre characterizes as governing those social roles of modernity was what he saw as being a fundamental feature of the Stalinist method. Stalinism is characterized by its view of social life as a series of

'causal chains'. Within Marxist theory, this is embodied in a mechanical understanding of the relationship between base and superstructure. Super-structural elements—beliefs, ideas and such—are conceptualized as subordinate to the economic base, effects of the economic base. So while it is possible to conceive of Ideas as being causal as well as simply effects, in their causal role, they are always subsidiary. Ideas can neither 'initiate' nor 'obstruct change'; rather they can only 'decelerate or accelerate' processes that are already underway (MacIntyre 1962b, p. 65). The result, as MacIntyre has long argued, is that human agency is reduced to a subsidiary role where desires, intentions, choices and beliefs are generally passive and reflective, rather than central to the historical process.

The mechanistic approach incorporates the assumption that human beings can be manipulated to desired ends which is the hallmark of bureaucratic rationality and the purported expertise of the manager. Indeed, it is essential to the manager's success that he or she is able to claim the ability to do this effectively. MacIntyre, in referring to Marx's ToF, would repeatedly make the point that such claims of manipulation necessarily divided the educator from the educated, or the manager from the managed, in that the manipulator conceived of themselves as being 'outside the machine', 'superior to society', both in possession of superior knowledge and exempt from the effects of the manipulative process they were engaging in (MacIntyre 1960b, p. 146). As he would argue in 1962:

> Marx himself saw clearly that mechanistic materialism implies a distinction between those who are the causally manipulated and those who are somehow able to perform the manipulation … What Marx sees is that mechanistic concepts are tied to elucidating all change as someone acting upon someone else, leading them into a desired position. (MacIntyre 1962b, pp. 67–68)

As Blackledge points out, this immediately places the manager in a position of incoherence in that their own role as the manipulator becomes voluntarist while the model they apply to those they manage is mechanical (Blackledge 2011, p. 67). MacIntyre's critique of the Weberian model of human action is that it is both manipulative in form and illusory in its claims. The extension of this claim to Marxism as seen in AV (and developed earlier as we will see) is clearly representative of MacIntyre's growing distance from Marxist politics; it too has now been

subsumed into the standpoint of civil society in that it is unable to break from the Enlightenment's mechanical understanding of human action (Knight 2007, p. 131). This evidently contrasts with the understanding of revolutionary leadership that MacIntyre developed while in the SLL. FaR, for example (MacIntyre 1960a), argued that a Leninist model of political leadership was not manipulative or elitist; indeed it could potentially foster a conception of revolutionary activity as the self-activity of the working class, therefore complimenting, not contradicting, Marx's own idea of revolutionary practice as sketched in the ToF. We will return to the contested nature of this critique later yet, for now, we need to understand how MacIntyre develops his critique of Marxism.

The way that MacIntyre extends this critique to Marxism is to suggest that while the manager, the social scientist and the Marxist revolutionary might initially appear quite different, they are all part of the same social class that are 'united by a common elitism' (Davidson 2016, p. 173). 1973s *Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution*, written in a period where MacIntyre was perhaps at his furthest removed from Marxism, is a key essay. Prefiguring the argument of AV, MacIntyre suggests that both manager and revolutionary share a common adherence to expertise as both claim superior knowledge. The manager's claim to superiority is one of managerial effectiveness in maintaining social stability while the revolutionaries claim is to the knowledge of how to destroy that stability (MacIntyre 1973, p. 342). The manager's and the revolutionary's position mirror, respectively the positivist and the theorist of ideology; the former claims superior, predictive knowledge of society, while the latter identifies society's ideological deformations yet believes he or she are themselves exempt from such ideological contamination (MacIntyre 1973, pp. 321–322). The two positions, in effect, are indistinguishable from each other (MacIntyre 1973, p. 337). Both reflect a 'parallel elitism' in their claim to a social-scientific understanding of society (MacIntyre 1973, p. 342); ultimately reflective of the standpoint of civil society's mechanistic view of human action.

MacIntyre has long been concerned with the 'question of how the masks of power are related to the faces behind the mask' (MacIntyre 1959c, p. 83). His argument here is that the mask of expertise worn by 'particular dominant orders and by order itself' (MacIntyre 1979, p. 60), is not only worn by the upholders of that order but by those opposed to it. Marxists and conservatives alike adopt the standpoint of civil society when they seek to deny that conflict—such as over end-goals—unpredictability and contestability are fundamental features of human

life (MacIntyre 1979, p. 60). On MacIntyre's view, both the manager and the revolutionary ideologically claim a special privilege of power in being able to resolve and move beyond these features of the social order (MacIntyre 1973, p. 342; 1979, p. 60). The extension of the Weberian claim to Marxism pivots on MacIntyre's belief that Marxism is no longer able to break from the standpoint of civil society. Because Marxism failed to rid itself of inadequate liberal presuppositions in theory it was unable to break from the institutionalization of such presuppositions in capitalist practice (Knight 2000, p. 82). Marx had pointed toward a potential revolutionary alternative, in the form of the standpoint of social practice (Lutz 2012, p. 33), yet Marxist revolutionaries that followed were unable to develop it, at least partially because they were subsumed into the dominant standpoint of the contemporary social order.

Despite his continued admiration—at least in some ways—for the key figures in Marxist history such as Lukács, Trotsky and Lenin, the contemporary MacIntyre increasingly justifies his critique of Marxism through reference to these. As we have seen, Trotsky's utilitarianism and Lukács' voluntarism are important examples of this. Lenin is no exception. MacIntyre's belief is that if such great figures, representative of the finest thinkers and practitioners Marxism has to offer, cannot escape these criticisms then no one can. Of course, this is not to suggest that the fault lies with individuals, or at least not only with individuals, it is rather to say that these characters are representations of systematic and seemingly inescapable political and philosophical inadequacies within Marxism—or so the contemporary MacIntyre would argue. MacIntyre's argument against Lenin and Leninism is that it comes to embody the same standpoint of civil society that the manager and the social scientist inhabit.

The contemporary MacIntyre is still careful to separate Lenin from other Marxists such as Plekhanov and Engels—a perennial target—at least at his most deterministic. MacIntyre argues that Lenin does not collapse into the deterministic, predictive traits common to various distortions of Marxism. Yet he nevertheless shares weaknesses with not only distorted Marxism but with Marx himself. In effect, MacIntyre argues, Lenin assumes the same position of authority as the manager in that he takes it for granted that he knows best what the working class want. Lenin mirrors the role of the theorist of ideology in that he treats any deviation from the end-goal of socialism as 'ideological distortion'

which he himself is exempt from (MacIntyre 2008, pp. 270–271). Part of Lenin's 'greatness', suggests MacIntyre, was in refusing to adopt the traits of prediction and predetermination inherent in the manager and social scientist, thus distancing himself from the standpoint of civil society in some ways; yet, ultimately, failing to break with it due to his implicit adoption of the elitist role of the theorist of ideology.

This remains one of MacIntyre's main objections to Marxism as a political practice. Precisely because Marxist leaderships have understood both socialism and the road to socialism as 'representing a collective subject with a universal interest' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 177), they have been unable to fulfill the conditions of genuine, grass-roots, democratic revolutionary practice. Even the best of them, such as Lenin, sanctified and made unfalsifiable the end-goal of socialism. This meant that they could never fulfill the understanding of revolutionary practice that Marx pointed toward in the ToF which MacIntyre now argues can only be achieved through an Aristotelian understanding of the relationship between party and worker. On this view, undemocratic practices, such as those embodied in the vanguard party (itself reflective of Marxism's 'pessimism' about the working class being able to deliver socialism for themselves) (Nicholas 2013, p. 230), are intrinsic to revolutionary organization and, rather than breaking with the Weberianism inherent in the standpoint of civil society, Marxists are in fact engaged in a program to establish it (Davidson 2016, pp. 172–173). To break with Weberianism would be to envisage a rationally determined mode of practice that questioned not only means but ends too (Knight 2007, p. 176), this, argues MacIntyre is what Marxism fails to do.

MacIntyre's contemporary view is that the standpoint of civil society, its institutions and indeed institutionalized presuppositions, tend to reduce those who attempt to conquer it to just another variant of it:

> those who make the conquest of state power their aim are always in the end conquered by it and, in becoming the instruments of the state, themselves become in time the instruments of one of the several versions of modern capitalism. (MacIntyre 1995b, p. xv)

MacIntyre is arguing that Marxism is hamstrung, and fatally so, because it fails to understand that any such move toward power, conceptualized on such a grand scale as Marxism does, necessarily falls victim to the

standpoint of civil society, in this case the machinations of the modern state. The nature of the modern state is such that it reduces those participants engaged in a project to conquer it 'to the status of instruments of this or that type of capital formation' (MacIntyre 1995c, p. xxviii). MacIntyre's contemporary politics of local community is, of course, predicated on this view of the state and also, by extension, on Marxism's failure to understand this. On this view, the suggestion is that Marxism fails to grasp the way that bureaucratic rationality, manipulation and very specific conceptions of human activity are interwoven into the very fabric of society, including the state. Any such attempt to control or direct the state to another purpose will be indelibly marked with that bureaucratic rationality.

As MacIntyre argues, the state has 'become more and more a set of institutions which have their own values' (MacIntyre 1999b, p. 210). The Weberianism of Marxists in their move toward power can therefore at least partially be explained by their failure to recognize this. As we discussed earlier, in the early 1960s MacIntyre was moving toward an understanding of the state that was more complex than the instrumental view and which saw the state increasingly intertwined with the market (MacIntyre 1961, 1963). Building on this much more in his post-Marxist period, MacIntyre now asserts that the modern state embodies certain values, a particular understanding of human action and rationality, to the extent that it must be rejected, so far as this is possible. Alternatively, those who try to co-opt or conquer the state, or to even put its rules into questions, find they are only able to do so effectively 'in so far as they learn how to employ the same idioms and types of argument with which the representatives of state and market justify their rules and their decisions' (MacIntyre 1999b, p. 211). This builds to a picture of Marxism that the contemporary MacIntyre suggests, despite the best efforts of its greatest practitioners such as Lenin, is both politically and ethically inadequate. MacIntyre continues to hold the belief that one cannot be a Marxist:

> … unless one is able to identify a class that is potentially revolutionary and a form of organisation that is capable of giving leadership to that class and a type of relationship between such an organisation and such a class that could issue in a self-governing grass roots participating democracy. (MacIntyre 2011, p. 182)

MacIntyre would certainly agree with Perreau-Saussine's claim that 'Marxism has been refuted by a tribunal it would be difficult to dismiss: History itself' (Perreau-Saussine 2011, p. 76). Yet this is not to say that he has recapitulated into the 'reactionary myth' of tracing an unbroken line from Lenin to Stalin, seeing the former as merely a 'precursor' of the latter as he seemed to do in 1953. Yet the flip side of this myth is, for MacIntyre, 'the myth of Lenin as the-Marxist-who-never-(well, hardly ever)-made-a-mistake' (MacIntyre 2008, p. 271). To distinguish between Lenin and Stalin is important, yet it is not in itself sufficient to save Leninism (MacIntyre 2011, p. 177). Despite continuing to recognize the strengths of Lenin, MacIntyre nevertheless holds to the belief that such mistakes prove fatal to Marxism, at least as a political practice.

Throughout this chapter we have explored what the contemporary MacIntyre understands to be the key failings of Marxism. The five-point critique of AV remains the most accurate summary of this, despite some changes which we will address in the concluding sections. The critique incorporates both perceived philosophical and political inadequacies; indeed, the two are inseparable from each other. Marxism is never the focal point of AV, yet much of what MacIntyre writes from AV onwards is informed by both his continuing admiration for Marxism as well as the critique of it that he has been developing for many decades. So far, little has been said of the contested nature of MacIntyre's critique of Marxism, so I must at least point out the nature of such contestations in the concluding chapter.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

> If, in the spirit of Marx or at least Hegel, one were to speak dialectically, one could say that the future of Marxism lies in its negation; not in the sense of abstract negation, i.e., simple rejection - say as anti-Marxism in neoconservative or neoliberal forms, but rather so-called determinate negation (Aufhebung), replacing what is corrupt or mistaken, and retaining (at a higher level of course) what is viable or promising. Thus the future of Marxism cannot mean going back to some allegedly pure original text, that is, returning to Marx before Marxism. It means instead determining what is left of Marx after Marxism that can serve for the development of fresh thinking. (Gould 1994, p. 377)

One way to conclude a discussion of MacIntyre's Marxism would be, in applying Gould's suggestion, to ask the question of what is left of Marxism in MacIntyre's contemporary thought. What, indeed, does the post-Marxist MacIntyre retain of Marx? The immediate answer to this question is, much more than he used to. As others have noted, probably the most important change in MacIntyre's contemporary position, in relation to Marxism, came in 1999's *Dependent Rational Animals* (Meilaender 1999; Kuna 2008). Here, MacIntyre reversed his claim from ASHOE, noting that he was 'in error in supposing that an ethics independent of biology was possible' (MacIntyre 1999, p. x). Whilst AV was an attempt to provide a socially teleological account of ethics (MacIntyre 2007, p. 197), the reintroduction of human nature goes some way to reducing the gap between the Marxist and the post-Marxist MacIntyre.

J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2_6

The MacIntyre of the 1950's of course predicated his search for a third moral position on such a conception of human nature, so this does at least remove one of the barriers between the Marxist and the post-Marxist MacIntyre. Similarly, beginning in the 1990's and continuing into his most contemporary works, MacIntyre certainly seems much more hospitable to Marxism than he was in the period after his 'official' rejection of Marxism in 1968 which continued into the 1970's and into the 1980's. Whilst Marxism was never completely rejected, it certainly seems that MacIntyre had come to believe, at least for a while, that there was nothing to be said for Marxism that had not already been said.

Surely a contributory factor to MacIntyre's own reengagement with Marxism was Kelvin Knight's important 1996 essay *Revolutionary Aristotelianism*. Knight's achievement here was to dismantle the mischaracterisations of MacIntyre as a conservative and a communitarian, instead conceptualizing the contemporary MacIntyre's role as deepening the 'insights inherited from Marx's critique of capitalism' (Blackledge and Knight 2011a, p. 2). It is in various constructive dialogues with post-Marxists and Marxists of different kinds that MacIntyre has brought Marx back into the picture, not least as a result of dialogues developed and maintained within ISME, The International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry. Beyond rescinding the rejection of human nature, for example, MacIntyre has argued that he would not now be as dismissive of Marxist economics as he once was (MacIntyre 1995). His 2016 book, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, contains an extended narrative discussion of C. L. R. James, and a generally greater willingness to discuss Marx and recognize his continued influence.

Yet, however much MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism has swung back and forth in his post-Marxist period, the influence of certain ideas and influences taken from Marx has always remained central. MacIntyre continues to take from Marx a view of capitalism as an inherently exploitative and dehumanizing system that must be opposed and resisted wherever possible (MacIntyre 2011, p. 174). If Aristotle and Aquinas remain the central figures that MacIntyre turns to, in order to explicate a practice able to break from the standpoint of civil society, it is only the 'central truths' and concepts derived from Marx that make the necessity of this break compelling (MacIntyre 2016, pp. 99–100). As Lutz has noted, whatever the extent and consequences of the degenerations of Marxism, this has no impact on Marx's critique

of capitalism (Lutz 2012, p. 35), and MacIntyre would be the first to recognize this. Indeed, in many ways, MacIntyre is concerned with deepening and extending Marx's critique of capitalism in his analysis of late modernity. He has developed powerful arguments as to the compartmentalizing, morally degenerative effects of the modern capitalist state, its institutions and politics, and the consequent inability of its citizens to become practically rational individuals. The MacIntyrean characters that inhabit modernity—the manager and their 'expertise' for one – are powerful examples of MacIntyre's ability to extend the work of the early Marx on the alienated nature of human relationships under capitalism, as well as the power of ideological obfuscation. Extending this view, Breen and Noponen have argued that Max's contemporary conception of a practice works to reinterpret and update Marx's theory of alienation (Breen 2005, p. 493; Noponen 2011, p. 168), whilst Bielskis suggests MacIntyre's understanding of practices and institutions acts to enrich Marx's own concept of labor (Bielskis 2011).

Yet it is not only the young Marx who continues to influence the contemporary MacIntyre. The Marx of *Capital,* suggests MacIntyre, is crucial to understanding capitalism as an economic system. Marx's theory of surplus value is the key to understanding both the accumulative and exploitative nature of the system he has recently claimed. So whereas in the early 1950's, MacIntyre was dismissive of Marxian economics, in his post-Marxist period, he holds to a thoroughly Marxian view as to how 'capitalism becomes the dominant economic mode of production and exchange' (MacIntyre 2016, pp. 96–97). MacIntyre is certainly concerned with extending Marx's theory of alienation through practices, yet it is the Marx of *Capital* who is vital to understanding the very nature of the system itself. MacIntyre continues to build from Marx's economic foundations a critique that asserts the 'injustice' of the capitalist system. He thoroughly opposes the 'apologists for capitalism' that point towards the enormously productive nature of the system, arguing that this is 'irrelevant' to the charge of injustice. Indeed, in MacIntyre's view, a 'just' society would be one based on the Marxian needs principle where the 'norms will have to satisfy a revised version of Marx's formula for justice in a Communist society' (MacIntyre 1999, p. 130). MacIntyre argues that it is only within a political society, based on such Marxian principles, that our individual and common goods can be realized.

MacIntyre retains from Marx a strong aversion to the individualism inherent within liberalism, emphatically stating that 'ever since I understood liberalism, I have wanted nothing to do with it' (MacIntyre 1994a, p. 43). This rejection is both at the philosophical level and at the political level, the latter which concretises the former in the institutions of modernity. With liberalism, the autonomy of the individual is the very 'essence' of morality; the individual is the 'fount of all value and the locus of all value' (MacIntyre 1971b, p. 283). Yet liberalism is ideological and rests on a mistake, it fails to recognize its own history which has taken a specific, individualized view of humanity and generalized it to a claim about the universal human condition and the best way for it to flourish. The consequences of the failures of liberalism, both philosophical and practical, have come to be embodied in social life itself (MacIntyre 2007, p. 22). MacIntyre has long taken from Marx the belief that the 'human essence is no abstraction inherent in every single individual'; his contemporary politics must be understood as resisting and opposing the reified liberal standpoint of civil society.

What has remained constant in MacIntyre is his continued opposition of 'human activity' to 'institutionalized alienation' (Knight 2007, p. 104). Central to the young Marx was a conception of revolutionary practice as the self-activity of the working class as pointed towards in The ToF. As we have consistently seen, this has remained a cornerstone of MacIntyre's philosophy and politics since 1953s M: A. MacIntyre has stated that his own Thomistic-Aristotelianism is largely an attempt to develop the young Marx's understanding of revolutionary practice (MacIntyre 1994b). The Enlightenment's 'mechanistic account of human action' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 84), its attempt to both predict and manipulate human behavior, was opposed by Marx's account of genuine human activity and remains central to MacIntyre's own understanding of the ethical life as lived by the rational moral agent. The young Marx also provided MacIntyre with what he saw as a proper understanding of the relationship of philosophy to practice. So whilst MacIntyre is committed to a strong, non-relativistic conception of truth (Knight 2007, p. 106), it is a truth not found through contemplation alone, but only in and through participation in practices. Such practices are potentially transformational, both in terms of the transformation of circumstances and of the individuals engaged in them.

Both MacIntyre and Marx point towards a conception of the relationship between ethics and politics that is often lacking in wider debates. Raymond Geuss has identified a fundamental weakness with what Bourg has called 'the ethical turn' within contemporary philosophy (Bourg 2007, p. 13). Geuss argues that a weakness in much contemporary ethical debate is that it treats ethics as 'a separate discipline… which has its own distinctive subject-matter and forms of argument' (Geuss 2008, p. 6). The problem is that when ethics is treated as an abstract phenomenon, isolated from other disciplines, debates themselves remain on an abstract level. It is unsurprising that this type of ethics is characterized by Badiou as being 'compatible with the self-serving egoism of the west' (Badiou 2001, p. 7). If ethics is politically impotent, ethical discussion can do nothing except leave everything as it is; as Eagleton has stated: 'If you see ethics and politics as separate spheres… you are likely to end up denigrating the political and idealizing the ethical' (Eagleton 1996, p. 325). MacIntyre can be seen to have built on Lukács claim that 'the task [of philosophy] is to discover the principles by means of which it becomes possible in the first place for an "ought" to modify existence' (Lukács 1971, p. 161). And whilst the 'principle by means of which it becomes possible' has changed significantly for MacIntyre, the importance of regarding ethics and politics as inseparable has remained central.

If there are still numerous points of contact between Marx and MacIntyre, there are clearly insurmountable differences. The central aim of chapter four was to provide an understanding of what it was in Marxism that MacIntyre came to reject. Centered on the five-point critique in AV, the chapter explored a number of interrelated philosophical and political inadequacies that MacIntyre continues to assert makes Marxism, at least as a coherent political project, fundamentally inadequate to the modern world. The complexity and wide-ranging scope of this critique, together with various logistical limitations, prevented any extended evaluation of this critique. However, what I was able to do was to highlight how much of MacIntyre's contemporary critique of Marxism rests on a rejection of views that MacIntyre himself had previously held in the 1950's and early 1960's. This at least provides us with a general idea as to how critics of the contemporary MacIntyre—closer to MacIntyre's own earlier, Marxist position—might begin to reply to MacIntyre. What can be done, within the present limitations, is to provide an overview of some of the areas of debate, therefore bringing out the contested nature of MacIntyre's contemporary critique of Marxism.

I began Chapter 4 by setting out what MacIntyre and others called Marx's problem of justification or the problem of informed desire. The central premise of this critique was that Marxism could not provide any adequate, coherent or ultimately compelling reason as to why individuals might choose to enter into something like Marx's community of free individuals. As with many of the other criticisms of Marxism, MacIntyre's suggestion was that Marxism failed to break from the standpoint of civil society and ended up adopting the inadequate Kantian or utilitarian moral frameworks that were characteristic of that standpoint. This immediately links this first criticism to another in that Marxism tends to collapse into 'relatively straightforward versions of Kantianism or utilitarianism' (MacIntyre 2007, p. 261), both in its theory and in its practice. This may well be true—indeed it is true of Marxism much of the time. Yet it could be argued that it is only true if one accepts the parameters of the debate that MacIntyre himself draws. And for the MacIntyre of AV, those parameters exclude the potentially crucial concept of human nature that may provide the moral objectivity that MacIntyre himself once thought that it might. As Sedgwick notes, it is arguably only from a certain angle, in a certain 'telling light' that the critique of Marxism holds *universally* firm (Sedgwick 1982).

I say universally, because once the possibility of an ethics grounded in something like the Marxian understanding of human nature and how that human nature interacts with capitalism, is *removed*, then MacIntyre's critique becomes irrefutably strong. If MacIntyre was arguably over-optimistic in his assessment of the possibilities for socialism in the 1950s as seen in NFTMW, it is questionable whether this justifies the overly-pessimistic alternative that he embraced. For it is from the latter position that socialism does indeed become an abstract utopia, shorn as it is from any foundations within human nature and history. Commenting on Marx and Aristotle, Scott Meikle has persuasively argued:

> the development of society is the process of the development of human nature towards the full realization of capacities and dispositions that are natural to humans… The notion of a nature involves that of an end or a telos, the end of a thing is that state in which the capacities it has by nature are fully developed and deployed. (Meikle 1991, p. 306)

To say that human nature has an end or a telos such as that envisaged by Marx or Aristotle is not, of course, to say that it is an end that will ever be reached. Yet what such an understanding provides is possibility, and possibility grounded, in the case of Marx, in the historical process. If one rejects such an understanding of human nature then socialism does indeed become an abstract utopia, not something that human beings will come to believe in through their own revolutionary transformation of desire, but a vision appealed to through the inadequate moral frameworks of liberal society. This does nothing to refute what MacIntyre says of Marxism, it merely highlights that, if only partially, MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism hinges on a rejection of a specific view of human beings, of history and society that he himself once held. As we noted earlier, MacIntyre has rescinded his rejection of human nature from AV, yet this has not brought him back to Marxism. He still maintains that the development of a revolutionary consciousness within modernity is impossible, at least in the scale and form imagined by Marxism. Perhaps though, it does at least reopen the avenues of debate between MacIntyre and Marxism.

An important part of MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism is his claim that even the great figures in the history of Marxism are unable to break from the standpoint of civil society in various ways. My aim in chapter four was to develop a discussion of some of these key figures on MacIntyre's terms, that is, an interpretation that captured MacIntyre's own views. More needs to be said about this, not least because MacIntyre's interpretation of such figures is, if not widely contested, nevertheless highly contested by some working within or close to the Marxist tradition. Kautsky, for one, gets relatively short thrift from MacIntyre. MacIntyre saw Kautsky's response to the neo-Kantian tendencies of the second international as a 'crude invocation of utilitarianism' (MacIntyre 1969, p. 378). Most would probably agree with MacIntyre here, though others have painted Kautsky in a different light (Blackledge 2006). In particular, Tony Burns has argued that MacIntyre's interpretation of Kautsky here is questionable, in a partial defence of the ethical content of Kautsky's position in *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*. Burns argues that rather than offering 'a rather unsophisticated brand of utilitarianism' Kautsky was in fact rather more subtle than this. Burns suggests that Kautsky thought that the *form* of the concrete moral law could indeed be defended on Kantian

grounds, yet its specific content was justified by appealing 'to what are usually considered to be utilitarian considerations' (Burns 2001, p. 43). Kautsky's ethics were therefore a 'mixture' of Kant and utilitarianism, more subtle than the picture painted by MacIntyre, yet nevertheless an ethics he would reject I would suggest, as it would still retain the fundamental failings of both inadequate moral frameworks.

More controversial targets of MacIntyre's, certainly in the view of many Marxists, would be Lukács and Lenin. As we saw, MacIntyre's critique of Lukács rests on what he called his 'ideal proletariat' assuming an essentially voluntarist role, bringing socialism through a heroic, Nietzschean act of will. This implies that Marxism repeats the mistaken and essentially idealized view of the working class, in the sense that they are unable to bear the revolutionary weight that Lukács and Marxism more generally places upon them in such conditions of moral impoverishment. In this context, Marxism fails to find any kind of adequate alternative to Nietzschean voluntarism. Lenin, too, repeats the failing in that he conceptualizes the role of the revolutionary party in such a way as to reproduce the manipulative relations of modernity, in directing the working class to their pre-formulated end of socialism in a top-down, elitist manner. It is worth reminding that this is not only, not necessarily even mainly, a critique of individuals, it is more importantly a critique of how Marxism mirrors the failings of those individuals much more widely in its political practice. Yet, as MacIntyre himself frequently does refer to such individuals to strengthen his arguments, it is important to put forward some alternative views.

MacIntyre, as we have seen, understands any kind of Leninist party to be fundamentally incompatible with 'self-governing grass roots participating democracy' (MacIntyre 2011, p. 183). On this view, the anti-democratic core of Leninism stems from the inflexibility of the relationship between worker and party, as well as the inflexibility of the pre-formulated end-goal of socialism. Leninism is anti-democratic and it fails to fulfill Marx's conception of revolutionary practice as rational self-determination. Many would agree with him. Hardt and Negri have argued that genuine 'democratic institutions' are incompatible with the 'hierarchical, vanguard form' characteristic of Soviet democracy (Hardt and Negri 2004, p. 354). Critchley argues that what he calls 'neo-Leninism' can be seen in the 'vanguardism of groups like Al-Qaeda' and is 'deeply suspicious of such forms of revolutionary vanguardism' (Critchley 2007, p. 146). More broadly, the overwhelming tendency in most interpretations of Lenin and

Leninism is to paint a picture of anti-spontaneity, distrust of the masses and an elitist conviction that socialist consciousness is the possession of the chosen few (Lih 2008, p. 15). Extending this particular interpretation further back in history, this mirrors Marx's retention of the Hegelian idea that history is the source of universal truth, only to be understood by those 'initiated into the correct theory' (Knight 2008, p. 47).

Another more sympathetic view of Lenin has been called the 'Yes, but…' interpretation. This view vehemently rejects any lineage between Lenin and Stalin, yet nevertheless accepts problematic areas in Lenin such as his view of workers and the role of the party. However, this grouping tends to suggest that Lenin nevertheless changed his view on these issues, presumably after his reading of Hegel (Lih 2008, p. 15). This would seem to be where the Marxist MacIntyre might fit, with his qualified embrace of a certain form of Leninism and a favorable reading of the post-Hegel Lenin (MacIntyre 1958, 1960). Of course, Lenin is one of those figures in MacIntyre's thought who he has held quite contrasting views on. In AV, the interpretation of Lenin and Leninism that informs, and continues to inform, his contemporary rejection of Leninist politics jars with his earlier views.

It is surely beyond question that there are significant areas of contestation within MacIntyre's contemporary interpretation of Lenin. Liebman, for example, argues:

> Whenever [Lenin] deals with action, far from condemning spontaneity, he urges the revolutionary organization to assume the leadership of such movements, even affirming that 'the greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses and the more widespread the movement, the more rapid, incomparably so, [is] the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy. (Liebman 1975, p. 31)

Leadership, on this view, is defined by spontaneity and a much more fluid conception of the relationship between party and worker. It is this keen understanding of the problem of class consciousness that Lenin had which can lead to a misunderstanding of his position. In opposition to the position that the later MacIntyre attributes to Lenin, it is only because Lenin understands that socialism can only come from below that he realizes that those 'below' are not present in an idealized and perfectly evenly-developed state of consciousness. Those who are more

politically advanced assume the position of leadership from those who are less advanced until the emergence of others who come to assume that same position. Lenin's position is close to the conception of leadership that was elaborated by Gramsci. Gramsci writes that 'it can happen that everyone at some time fries a couple of eggs or sews up a tear in a jacket, we do not necessarily say that everyone is a cook or a tailor.' The point that Gramsci is making is that 'all men are intellectuals… but not all men in society have the function of intellectuals' (Gramsci 1971, p. 9). Intellectual or leader is conceived not statically or rigidly, as the post-Marxist MacIntyre seems to suggest, but in a fluid, organic way in which different people at different times (with different levels of consciousness) can assume that position. As Gramsci argues:

> "Organicity" can only be found in democratic centralism, which is so to speak a "centralism" in movement-i.e. a continual adaptation of the organization to the real movement, a matching of thrusts from below with orders from above, a continuous insertion of elements thrown up from the depths of the rank and file into the solid framework of the leadership apparatus which ensures continuity and the regular accumulation of experience. (Gramsci 1971, pp. 188–189)

Trotsky argued that Lenin's 'chief strength' was in being able to understand what he called the 'inner-logic' of the movement. His role was not to impose his plan on the masses, but to help them formulate their own plan, suggesting that the party played a transformative role of both educator and educated, neither of which were fixed, static roles (Trotsky 2000, p. 234). Indeed, Lenin's stress was on unpredictability, sudden transformations and unexpected upsurges, and how these interacted with a self-changing working-class consciousness (Harman 1969). What Lenin calls an over-emphasis on 'Economism' or the ideology of trade-unionism (the belief that workers should concentrate struggle on basic, economic issues), creates the problem of clouding the possible development of revolutionary consciousness by narrowing the focus of struggle to purely workplace-orientated struggles (Lenin 1961, p. 384). This, as we saw earlier, was a similar criticism that Edward Thompson made of MacIntyre in *The Point of Production* (Thompson 1960). Thompson, arguing against MacIntyre, asserted that it was important to also realize the importance of political and intellectual struggles that covered a wider sphere of social life than purely focusing on those 'basic antagonisms' at the point of

production. Interestingly, Lih points to the fact that the critique of economism in *What is to be done?* is as much about the tendency of socialists and others to treat the working class like children and therefore assume a position of superiority to them. From this perspective, discussing politics with the worker is a waste of time, and Lenin's point was that the worker is more than capable of understanding more wide-ranging theoretical and practical issues than purely trade union struggles (Lih 2008, p. 226).

None of this constitutes any kind of coherent reply to MacIntyre, yet it highlights some of the premises from which replies have been made (Blackledge 2008a, 2012). It also brings us to MacIntyre's contemporary 'revolutionary Aristotelianism'. For those of a Marxist disposition, there are two areas that might be concerning in the contemporary MacIntyre. Firstly, the nature of the critique of Marxism which provides the foundations to MacIntyre's contemporary position; secondly, the political implications of his revolutionary Aristotelianism (Gregson 2015). It is this second area that needs further discussion. MacIntyre's post-Marxism necessarily implies, of course, certain acknowledged failures of Marxism (Perreau-Saussine 2011, p. 76). Its aim is not only to incorporate and develop Marx's ideas, but to move 'beyond' them in further exploring the Aristotelianism inherent in Marx's 'road not taken' (Knight 2008, p. 48).

MacIntyre accepts Knight's characterisation of his position as 'revolutionary Aristotelianism'. Clearly, what the contemporary MacIntyre means by revolutionary is not what Marxism means by revolutionary. From a Marxist perspective, what is most problematic in MacIntyre are the potential solutions that he has historically posited to the ethical and political dilemmas inherent in liberal modernity. What exactly does MacIntyre mean here by 'revolutionary practice'? Certainly not what Marxists mean—even his interpretation of Marx's own ToF is not without controversy (though MacIntyre himself recognizes that this is so). What Marx had in mind when he used the term 'revolutionary practice' was, as Margolis puts it, 'the ultimate self-transformation of the proletariat, its abolishment of itself as a class' (Margolis 1992, p. 336). Similarly, Lebowitz argues that revolutionary practice translates as 'the self-development of human beings through their activity', yet such activity is characterized by workers having to pass through 'long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men' (Leibowitz 2003, p. 241). Margolis notes that the Marxian notion of practice as being able to change the species-being is a notion that is alien to Aristotelian thought, stating that Marx not only opposes Feuerbach

but also Aristotle at every turn (Margolis 1992, p. 334). Margolis argues that there is no recognition of the historicity of the human essence in Aristotle which hardly shows, 'as Alasdair MacIntyre attempts to do, that the Aristotelian virtues can be construed as a merely formal schematism that rightly fits (with prescriptive force) any historically contingent set of social practices in the modern world' (Margolis 1992, p. 335).

For MacIntyre, what makes certain activities and practitioners revolutionary is the degree in which they break with the standpoint of civil society. It is this break that is best expressed in Aristotelian terms, that is, in terms alien to the standpoint of modernity. The 'standpoint of morality' and its counterpart, modern moral philosophy, is characterized by there being no place for Thomistic and Aristotelian notions such as ends, common good and natural law (MacIntyre 2016, p. 98). What could be deemed revolutionary would be an alternative set of practices informed by an alternative understanding of the relationship between theory and practice—as pointed towards by Marx in The ToF (MacIntyre 2016, p. 99). What the Thomist revival, informed by Marx's critique of capitalism, made possible was a commitment to "making and sustaining institutions that provide for those practices through which common goods are achieved" which are usually in 'conflict with the institutions of the dominant culture … since they put in question the morals and politics of that culture' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 110). The common goods of workplaces, schools or governments are achieved 'in producing goods and services that contribute to the life of the community and in becoming excellent at producing them,' and these are achieved through 'shared deliberation and decision' and not through 'standards imposed by external managerial control' (MacIntyre 2016, pp. 170–171).

MacIntyre's account is of virtue-driven practices that can resist the degenerative influences of modernity which so often co-opt and degenerate them. Therefore, at least on MacIntyre's interpretation, this type of practice perhaps takes a more concrete form than Marx's concept of revolutionary practice as seen in the ToF; even those more critical of MacIntyre's contemporary politics note that what he offers is nevertheless a 'concrete utopia' (Blackledge 2008b, p. 7). MacIntyre's revolutionary practice is a 'utopianism of process' rather than a 'utopianism of form', concerned with outlining specific ways to achieve particular goals, beyond the 'self-negating' utopianism of form (Harvey 1996, p. 333). One of the problems with Marxism from Macintyre's perspective is not that is too radical, it is that it is not radical enough as it is itself subsumed in the thought and practice of liberal modernity. Only a mode of

thought and practice that is utterly opposed to such dominant modern modes of thought and practice, such as the revolutionary Aristotelianism MacIntyre adheres to, can provide adequate moral goods of resistance. And this is ultimately one reason why Marxism fails.

From MacIntyre's perspective, Marxism was no longer applicable to the situation of late modernity so such forms of engagement and resistance had to be theorized and practiced in quite different ways. What MacIntyre uses for examples of such resistance in the contemporary world are communities where 'work is not a means to an external end but is constitutive of a way of life, the sustaining of which is itself an end' such as within certain Danish fishing communities or the slums of Monte Azul in Brazil (MacIntyre 2016, p. 179). Importantly, MacIntyre notes that such examples of communities are now 'far from unique' (MacIntyre 2016, p. 181), whilst Knight argues such resistance can be understood in a much less exclusive framework of practices against institutions (Knight 1996, p. 19). As Davidson notes, MacIntyre's rejection of Marxism was never quite a case of 'MacIntyre's inner Keynes triumphing over his inner Trotsky' as he could never give up on Marxism for reformism (Davidson 2016, p. 171).

MacIntyre's life-long aversion to liberalism, his recognition of the exploitative nature of capitalism, and his admiration for the prophetic humanism of The Gospel and the young Marx drew him closer to Marxism as a form of political practice. Within the New Left, he began to develop his arguments about the moral incoherence that characterized modernity and which presented itself in the inadequate responses to the problems of Stalinism. Here, he would make significant contributions to Marxist ethical theory, however unfinished or under-developed, which remain some of the most important and original essays in their field. It was through his engagement with the revolutionary Marxists of the SLL, and later IS, that he would begin to concretize these ideas through a deeper engagement with Marxist politics, particularly the nature of the party and its relationship to the working class. MacIntyre was concerned with the possibility of developing a form of revolutionary practice, as envisaged by Marx, that was democratic, anti-elitist, and that placed the rationally self-determined moral agent at its core. This remains central to the contemporary MacIntyre and his contemporary politics can be understood as building on what he took to be valuable in Marx, as well as responding to the inability of Marxists to implement Marx's vision in practice.

Particularly within IS, MacIntyre was coming to the conclusion that the working class were no longer the revolutionary agent of change that he once hoped they might be. His debates with various Marxists, and their influence on him, in some ways continue to provide the foundations of MacIntyre's contemporary politics, built as it is on the assumption that capitalism can now not be overthrown. AV and MacIntyre's later work can therefore be partially understood as a response to the inadequacies of Marxism, both philosophical and practical. It was important to develop the brief critique of Marxism in AV as, by doing so, a more comprehensive picture of why MacIntyre came to reject Marxism was developed. This critique is far from uncontested though; not least because it significantly contrasts with MacIntyre's own earlier understanding of Marxism and the possibilities it contains.

Fredric Jameson once remarked that After Virtue poses more questions than it answers and, as a result, a return to Marx may be the only way to find such answers (Jameson 1988, p. 184). MacIntyre has of course never completely left Marxism, yet he would certainly rule out any return to Marxist politics. Marxist critics of MacIntyre might point towards his review of Dunayevskaya to emphasize how far MacIntyre's politics have shifted. The thrust of MacIntyre's critique of Dunayevskaya was that she had substituted an Hegelian awareness for the 'possibilities of human life in our age' and put in its place a conception of working class activity from which it becomes possible to read the revolutionary signs like a 'theoretical barometer'. It is this idealization of the working class that is a product of those who have 'lost their faith in the real flesh-and-blood working class' (MacIntyre 1958, p. 44). From a Marxist perspective, MacIntyre himself has lost faith in the working class with the finality of his rejection of any large-scale transformation in society or consciousness. For many on the left, what amounts to MacIntyre's rejection of the dialectical possibilities within and against capitalism would be too much to bear. Yet this would be to underestimate the hope for a radically different form of life that nevertheless still runs through all MacIntyre's work, despite his disengagement from Marxism.

The way that MacIntyre goes about developing his work and testing out his theories has not really changed through his entire intellectual genesis. MacIntyre argues that there are three stages to justify any substantive position in ethics and politics. Firstly, rehearse all the objections to it; secondly, make the best possible answer to each of these objections and, thirdly, advance the arguments for the conclusion only after

all those objections have been shown to fail (MacIntyre 2016, p. 88). Half a century ago, it was Nietzsche who provided what MacIntyre saw as the most robust challenge to any theory of morality. MacIntyre himself admitted that, at that time, he had no adequate answer to Nietzsche. Using MacIntyre's own logic, his revolutionary Aristotelianism is only feasible if it can meet, and answer, the challenge of not only Nietzsche but of other competing theories of resistance to modern liberal society—such as Marxism—and show why they fail and his do not. The critique outlined in AV, for MacIntyre, highlights key reasons why Marxism fails not just as a political practice, but at least partly as philosophy too. Whether one accepts MacIntyre's critique or not, I would argue that it is inherently valuable in that its power forces Marxist and post-Marxist alike to engage with it. If MacIntyre's revolutionary Aristotelianism can go beyond Marxism's failures, then perhaps it can further help to theorize and give expression to the agency and contradictions inherent within the contemporary neoliberal order. Marxist and post-Marxist alike can at least agree on this.

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J. Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics and Politics*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03371-2